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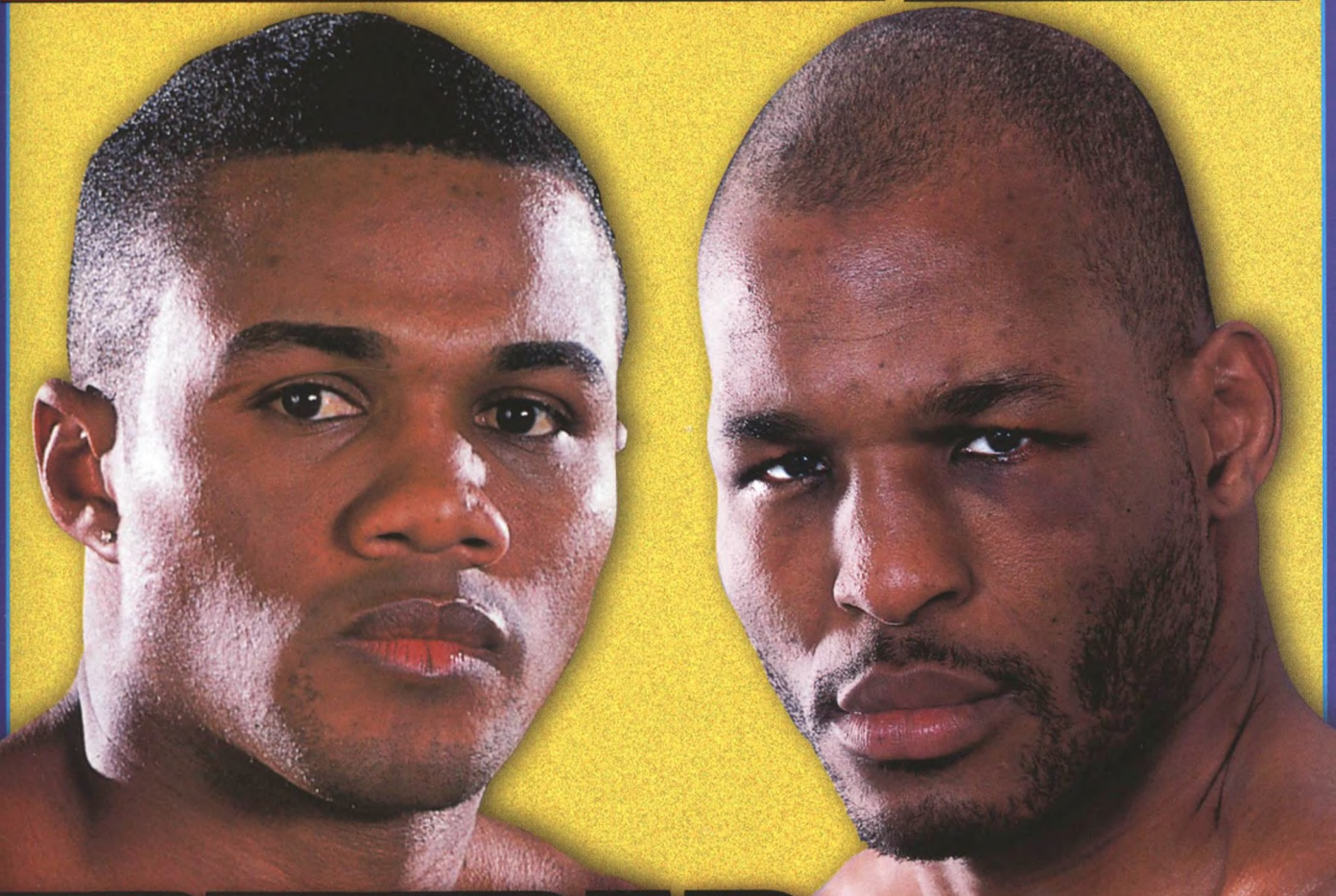

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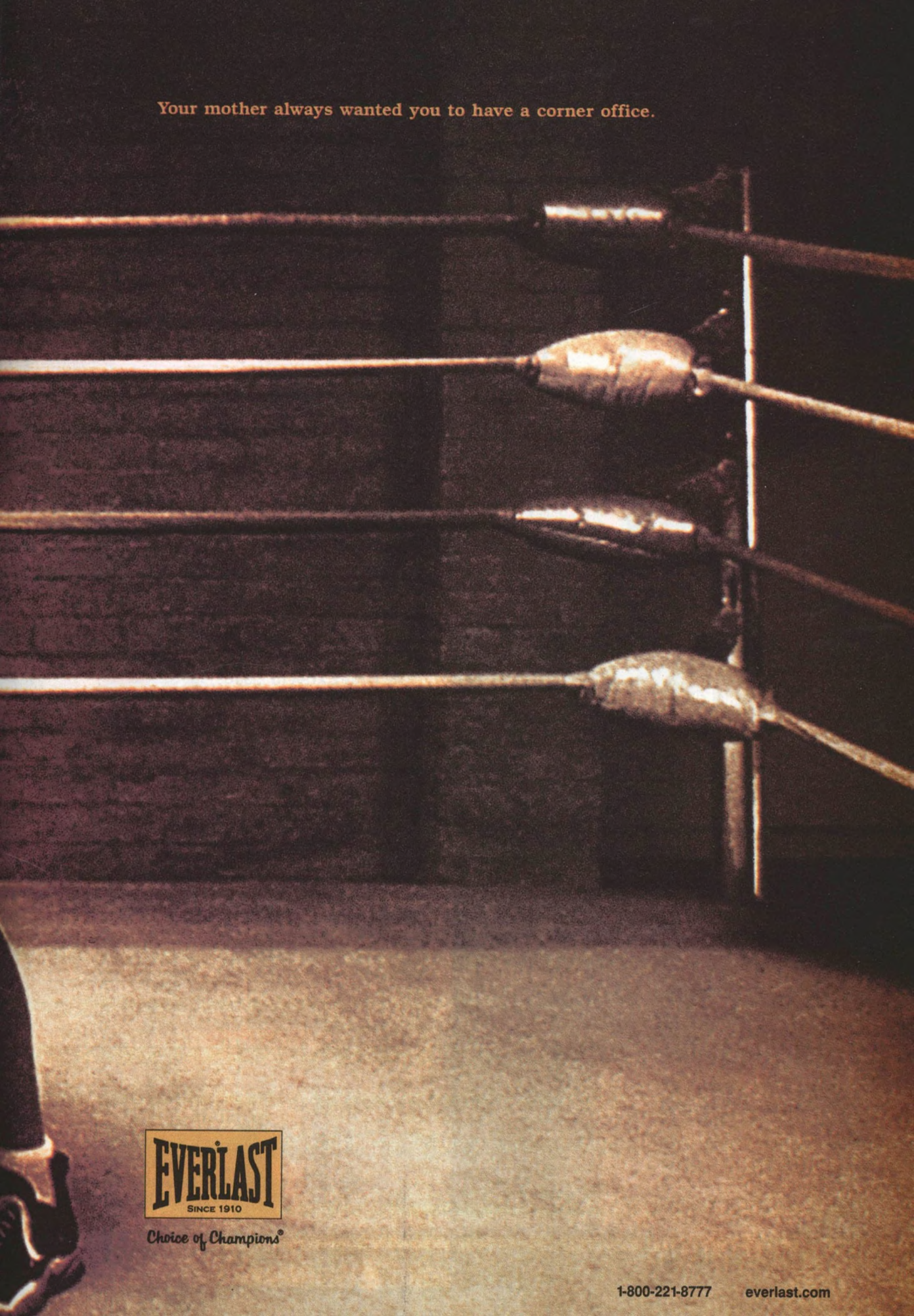
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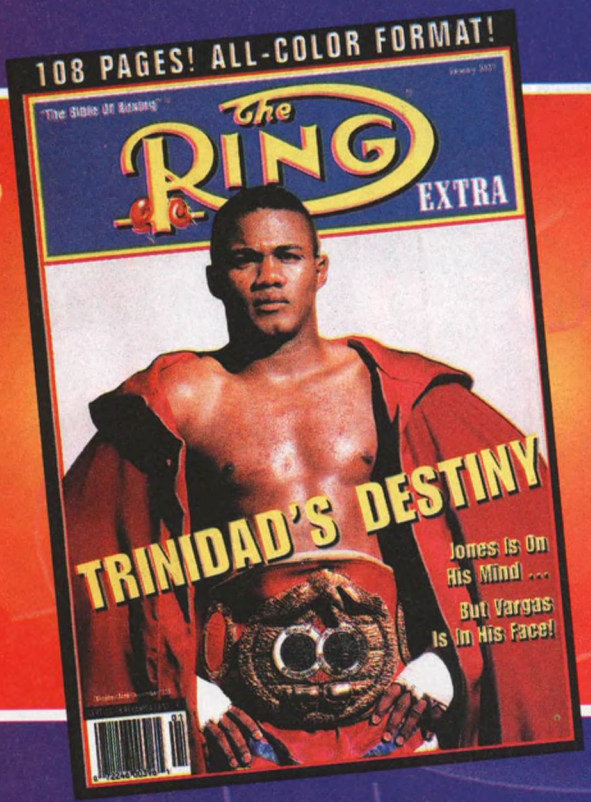

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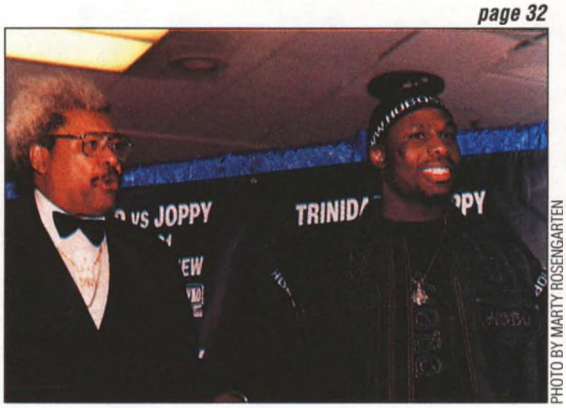

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Cover:
Felix Trinidad
by courtesy of HBO
Bernard Hopkins
by Mark W. Hill

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Joe Kalman

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PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

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RINGSIDE

As Floyd Mayweather cringed in agony and doubled over, one of his gloves brushed the canvas, which prompted referee Dale Grable to give the WBC super featherweight champion an eight-count. The cause of the knockdown, however, was not the punches of challenger Carlos Hernandez, but rather a combination to the head that *Mayweather* had just landed! As most readers already know, "Pretty Boy Floyd" entered the ring for the Hernandez bout with two injured hands, and suffered the first knockdown of his title reign when the pain overpowered him in the sixth round.

Afterward, much of the media praised Mayweather for fighting through the pain to retain the title via unanimous decision. I, on the other hand, think Mayweather, his camp, and promoter Top Rank should give everybody their money back.

If the injury is so unbearable that a fighter requires injections in both hands prior to a bout, as Mayweather acknowledged he did, he shouldn't be fighting in the first place. Yeah, yeah, I know that hand injuries are an occupational hazard in boxing and that few fighters ever enter the ring 100 percent physically fit, but when a boxer is hurting so badly that he can't perform at anywhere near his normal level, he's cheating both his customers and himself. I don't know if HBO was aware of Mayweather's injuries going in, but if it was, the network is also guilty of perpetuating a hoax.

It's an entirely different story when a fighter is injured during a bout, but when he enters the ring as significantly damaged as Mayweather, it's nothing short of consumer fraud. The fans in Grand Rapids who shelled out good money for tickets were ripped off, as were HBO's subscribers.

The reason the Mayweather-Hernandez fight went forward regardless of the condition of Pretty Boy's hands was, of course, the almighty dollar. Do you honestly think Mayweather, who received a reported $2-million purse, would have taken such a risk for, say, $100,000—or if the guy in the other corner was a more dangerous opponent? Of course not. And don't give me any of that the-show-must-go-on baloney. What transpired was not the show fans paid to see.

Team Mayweather and Top Rank walked away with a handsome profit, but the sport that provided the payday took an unnecessary hit. Some would say that compared to a lot of the underhanded stuff that goes on in boxing, what Mayweather and his co-conspirators did wasn't such a big deal, and they'd be right. Still, fighting Hernandez with two bum hands was a case of greed overriding good sense. And regardless of what Gordon Gecko says, greed is a wretched reason for doing anything, especially when the paying public is footing the bill.

***

Just before the press deadline for this issue, I learnt of the death of former light heavyweight champion Joey Maxim. Joey's name doesn't come up too often when the great fighters of the past are recalled, and that's a shame, because during his 18-year pro career, Maxim beat a lot of outstanding fighters, including fellow Hall of Famers Jersey Joe Walcott, Ray Robinson, and Floyd Patterson. A full tribute will appear in the November 2001 issue of THE RING EXTRA.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

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ROUND ONE

RIJKER KEEPS ROLLING

Lucia Rijker has always looked for challenges. After she became a dominant kick-boxing champion, she moved on to conquer the boxing world. Now generally recognized as the best female boxer in the world, Rijker has found a refreshing alternative in acting. The Danish junior welterweight met and mastered another challenge in the physical and mental demands that were required to portray a character called Red #6 in the remake of the science-fiction cult classic *Rollerball*, due to be released nationally in movie theaters August 17 by MGM Pictures.

PHOTOS BY ATTILA DORY/MGM PICTURES

Rijker as Red #6 in Rollerball

Rijker, who last fought in August 1999 and has a 14-0 (13) record, found making the movie unlike anything she had experienced before. She was on rollerblades for 14 hours a day, and though she used a stunt double for the extreme skating scenes, Rijker did her own fight scenes.

"It was all new to me," Rijker admitted. "I was going through something almost like an identity crisis. I felt like I landed on Planet Hollywood. The toughest part for me was trusting the director. That was tough because you have to surrender to someone else's judgment. I'm used to being an individual in the ring. I do things on my own in there. But being in front of the camera was like getting a knockout, and I came away with a greater appreciation for the stunt world. The stuntmen make actors look great."

Rijker said she made more money filming *Rollerball* than she did in her 14 pro fights combined and is open to the idea of being in more action movies. But Rijker is also hoping to return to the ring within the next few months. There will, however, have to be a few changes made if she does return.

In the past, Rijker grew frustrated and felt exploited by the politics of women's boxing. She also did not want to sully her image as a legitimate athlete in light of the emergence of jiggle queens who have little or no boxing skills. In fact, the striking Rijker said she has been approached in the past by marketing people who have asked her to show "more skin."

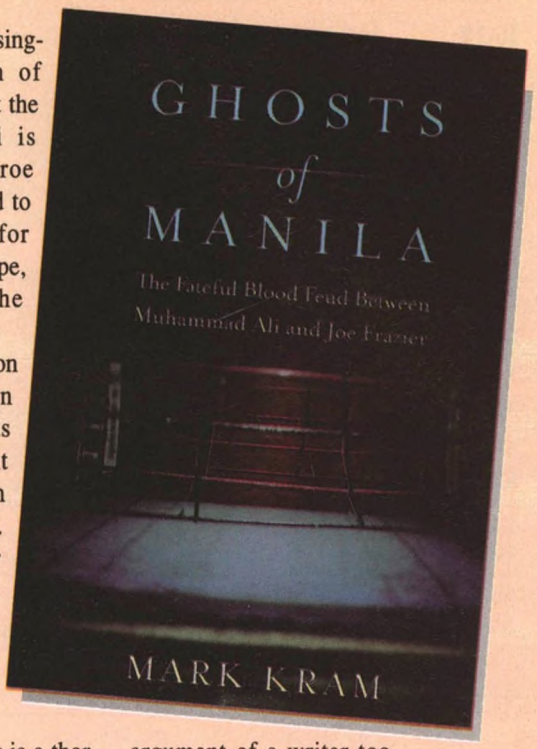
"I've always been a serious athlete, and I always felt training hard, working hard, and being successful would help me become more accepted," said the highly intelligent Rijker. "I found I hit a point where doing those things wasn't enough. I think it's okay to show the feminine side of myself, but there are certain feminine qualities I want to hold on to."

Rijker is hoping her exposure in *Rollerball*, which also stars Chris Klein, LL Cool J, and Rebecca Romijn-Stamos, will open up other avenues. She is currently part of the *Thunderbox* broadcast team and feels very comfortable in that role. Even so, the lure of the ring may be too great for Rijker to resist.

"I think I'll eventually fight Christy Martin. It's something the public and, I think, Christy wants, too," Rijker said. "The lifestyle of an athlete is something I always enjoyed. You can definitely expect me back in the ring, maybe by the end of this year or early next year."

—Joe Santoliquito

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



In Mark Kram's brilliant and provocative book *Ghosts Of Manila: The Fateful Blood Feud Between Muhammad Ali And Joe Frazier* (HarperCollins, 232 pages, hardcover, $25), the author paints a portrait of Ali that many today might not want to accept. Ali is portrayed as a man defined by other men, whether it be by the Muslims, his entourage, or the hero-worshipping literati. The truth, according to Kram, is that Ali was no more worldly or politically savvy than Frazier, and that Ali's charm and uncommon boxing skills had a way of blinding those around him to who he truly was.

Through time, "The Greatest" has become more porcelain god than human, impervious to reproach. Kram puts a human face on Ali, writing: "Cheap myth coruscates the man; the wire scheme for his sculpture is too big. Junk commentary has been slapped on it to the point that a precise appreciation of who Ali was (and is) has become obscured ... He has been celebrated for the wrong reasons and has been interpreted by an increasingly uninformed generation of media that was barely born at the height of his career. Ali is already, like Marilyn Monroe and Elvis Presley, condemned to wander television screens for eternity in snippets of file tape, the visual wallpaper of the mythic."

Most of the book centers on Ali, but Kram gives us an insightful look at Frazier as well, still full of resentment over the way Ali treated him during their three-bout series. Kram reveals to us a Frazier who was and still is openly accessible, from black-tie affairs to reminiscing with people from the roughest areas of Philadelphia.

Overall, *Ghosts Of Manila* is a thoroughly entertaining and delightful read, a must for any boxing fan's library.

—Joe Santoliquito

Lennox Lewis wasn't the only victim of the Hasim Rahman right hand that separated the Briton from his two-thirds of the heavyweight title. So was James Lawton, whose *Mission Impossible: How Lennox Lewis Unified The World Heavyweight Title* (Mainstream Sport, 255 pages, softcover, £7.99) was ill-advisedly "revised and updated" to add megatonnage to the growing bombardment of expert analyses aimed at convincing us that, on the merry-go-round of heavyweight history, Lewis rode at least even with Joe Louis and Jack Dempsey.

Now that Lewis has come crashing back to earth, Lawton's book is open to dismissal as the elegant but overwrought argument of a writer too caught up in his subject and their shared nationality. That's a shame, because if you are a fan of wonderful writing and boxing reportage on a par with that of Hugh McIllvanney, this book will do to you what Rahman did to Lewis.

The focal point is Lewis' first fight against Evander Holyfield, the rounds of which are interspersed with looks at other facets of the boxer's life and career. The draw decision, of course, is treated like the greatest affront to the Empire since those upstart colonists had their tea party in Boston Harbor.

Lawton's turns on Don King, Holyfield—"if your philandering can qualify you as at least an apprentice Casanova, while concurrently declaiming the gospel to a point of ecstasy, there is a good chance that fantasy and reality will merge at some point"—and the execrable, clogging politics of boxing, are well worth putting up with the Lewis idolatry. For that, what happened April 22 in South Africa seems more than adequate punishment.

—Pete Ehrmann

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
5-8-01	**Paul Spadafora W 12 Joel Perez**	**ESPN2**	**IBF l**	**A**	**C+**	**C**
Spadafora keeps winning, but is he proving anything?						
5-11-01	Ebo Elder KO 6 Tyrone Ivory	ESPN2	jw	C	B-	C+
Hometown hero takes small step up in class, whips Ivory with bodyshots						
5-11-01	Terronn Millett W 10 Luis Perez	ESPN2	w	C+	B-	C
Faded Millett lucky to get nod						
5-12-01	Christy Martin W 10 Kathy Collins	PPV	jw	B+	A	B-
Until Lucia Rijker proves otherwise, Martin is still the best female fighter in the world						
5-12-01	**Vernon Forrest W 12 Raul Frank**	**PPV**	**IBF w**	**A**	**B**	**C**
After all this, Forrest's title win was a little anti-climactic, no?						
5-12-01	Chris Byrd W 12 Maurice Harris	PPV	h	B	B-	C
Well, there's a reason Harris has all those losses on his record						
5-12-01	**Felix Trinidad KO 5 William Joppy**	**PPV**	**WBA m**	**A+**	**B+**	**A-**
This is what it looks like when a legitimate all-time great is at the top of his game; savor it						
5-13-01	Antonio Diaz KO 5 Jorge Luis Lopez	Uni	jw	C+	C	C+
Diaz steamrolls Lopez, scores knockdowns in third, fourth, and fifth rounds						
5-18-01	Micky Ward KO 1 Steve Quinones	ESPN2	jw	B-	C+	B
With the hook, Ward is legitimately dangerous; without it, he's just another guy with an annoying accent						
5-19-01	Panchito Bojado KO 2 Ernesto Fuentes	Show	l	C	B	B-
Fuentes came to fight, but so did Bojado; can we get some stock in this kid?						
5-19-01	Jeff Lacy KO 1 Tony Pope	Show	sm	C	C+	C
We don't know how far Lacy will go, but we know raw power when we see it; this guy cracks						
5-19-01	Antwun Echols KO 3 Charles Brewer	Show	sm	B+	B+	A
Nobody makes for a better fight than two hard-hitting guys who don't have a chin between them						
5-22-01	Terrance Lewis KO 9 Robert Davis	ESPN2	h	C+	B	B+
Hey, if Hasim Rahman can be champ of the world, why not Lewis?						
5-25-01	Terrance Cauthen W 10 Franco Ogentho	ESPN2	jw	C	C+	C+
We know it's not the way he should fight, but we like Cauthen better when he stands more and moves less						
5-25-01	Reggie Johnson W 12 Will Taylor	ESPN2	lh	B+	C+	D+
What, this was so exciting the first time we had to do it again?						
5-26-01	Jesus Chavez W 12 Juan Arias	HBO	jl	B+	C+	A-
We expected a lot from Chavez; we didn't from Arias and got it anyway; excellent fight						
5-26-01	**Floyd Mayweather W 12 Carlos Hernandez**	**HBO**	**WBC jl**	**A**	**C**	**D**
Consistency is why Mosley and Trinidad are better fighters than Mayweather						
6-1-01	Ahmed Santos KO 8 Kenito Drake	ESPN2	jw	C+	C+	B-
Santos rises from fourth-round knockdown to outlast, out-tough Drake						
6-1-01	Steve Johnston Tech. Win 9 James Crayton	ESPN2	l	B+	C-	C+
Johnston not what he used to be, but good enough to trounce typically reluctant Crayton						

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Tel—Telemundo

SUPER STUPID

Apparently, there's a group of people down in Venezuela with nothing better to do with their time than dream up new ways to ruin boxing. We are, of course, referring to the WBA and its latest brainstorm—"super champions." And to make matters even more ludicrous, the WBA is crediting Lennox Lewis with suggesting the convoluted concept. That's right, the same Lennox Lewis the organization shafted last year when it erroneously stripped him of the WBA belt he'd won in the ring by beating Evander Holyfield.

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

Roy Jones clearly qualifies for new WBA category

While the WBA says that it is "still working on the set of regulations that will rule the super champions," according to a communique THE RING received from the organization's headquarters in late-May, a fighter becomes a so-called super champion if he holds two or more belts from either the WBA, WBC, IBF, or WBO. The WBA claims that the benefit of such a scheme is that it would give the super champions "a more flexible time to defend their titles as well as the challengers the chance to fight for the title."

Apparently, in order to facilitate the desired flexibility, there will be a shifting set of rules governing mandatory defenses, depending on exactly how "super" a particular champion is. If a heavyweight has two belts, he gets 21 months between mandatories, but if he has three or four belts, he's allowed 24 months. There is, however, a different set of rules for fighters below the heavyweight division. Two-belt supers get 18 months between mandatories, while three- and four-belters get 21. (Guess that makes fighters with three or more belts superduper champions?)

From THE RING's perspective, it sounds like a sure-fire formula for further chaos—not to mention an ingenious way for the WBA to fleece the sport of additional sanctioning fees. How stupid does the WBA think we are? Piling more manure on top of an old dung heap never makes it smell any sweeter.

—Nigel Collins

JORRIN CHARGED WITH RAPE

Three weeks after former IBF junior lightweight champion Diego Corrales was sentenced to two years in prison for beating his pregnant wife, WBC super bantamweight champion Willie Jorrin was charged with allegedly raping and beating his live-in girlfriend. Both Jorrin and Corrales are from Sacramento, California.

West Sacramento police spokeswoman Amy Weirich said a woman came to the Police Department at 5:30 a.m. on May 26 and reported she was attacked by Jorrin in their home. "She had visible physical injuries, but none requiring medical care," said Weirich.

According to the police, the woman, whose name was withheld because she is the victim of an alleged sex crime, argued with the boxer before dawn. At some point, police said, Jorrin kept the woman from leaving the home and raped her.

Jorrin, 31, turned himself in to police that afternoon, posted $75,000 bail, and was released from Yolo County Jail. He was scheduled to be arraigned on June 25.

"It's a big surprise," Jorrin's promoter, Don Chargin, told the *Sacramento Bee*. "It's hard for me to believe. I've known him and his wife for a long time [the woman is the mother of Jorrin's two children, and his friends and family call her his wife]. They always seem to get along real good. He's a quiet type of guy and I've never known him to drink or anything like that."

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN

Jorrin is the latest boxer arrested for domestic violence

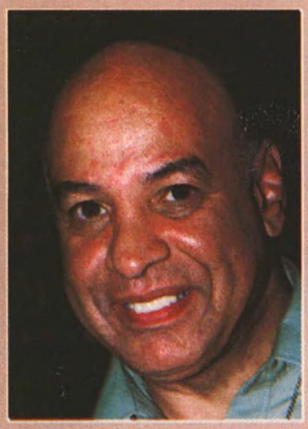
Said Freddie Roach, Jorrin's trainer: "I've never seen that side of Willie. It doesn't add up. Willie is one of the nicest people I've ever met in boxing."

"The family is together and trying to support Willie," said John Cazares, Jorrin's brother-in-law and manager. "I think in the end everything is going to be cleared up."

Ironically, several months before his arrest, Jorrin had spoken about Corrales and other Sacramento athletes, such as Rae Carruth, who had run afoul of the law recently.

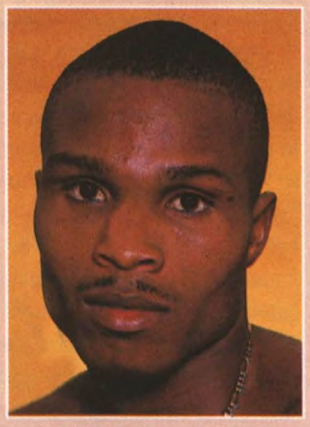
"People perceive some boxers as gangsters and punks," Jorrin told the *Bee*, "but I want my kids to see their father as a good upstanding man."

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Cortez: Hollow victory

Top referee **Joe Cortez** received a silver lining of sorts for one of the darkest clouds of his life in early-May, when a Los Angeles jury awarded his family $55.4-million in compensatory damages from Continental General Tire for a 1996 car accident that left his daughter, **Cindy**, a quadriplegic. The jury decided that the accident was caused by a tire defect. "It's a hollow victory," Cortez said. "No matter what they give us, my daughter will never walk again" ... According to a spokeswoman from the Frazier Rehab Institute in Louisville, Kentucky, former WBA heavyweight titlist **Greg Page** was improving as of mid-May from head injuries suffered in a bout two months earlier. But despite that seemingly positive update, Page was still paralyzed on the left side of his body ... Former WBC super middleweight champion **Davey Hilton** received sentencing in mid-May for his sexual assault conviction. The Montreal fighter was given seven years in prison, though his lawyer, who had asked for a three-year sentence, plans to appeal ... Former IBF 130-pound champ **Diego Corrales** got the anticipated two-year sentence after pleading guilty to felony domestic violence charges ... British middleweight **Jason Matthews** received a nine-month sentence in early-May after pleading guilty to breaking the nose of his former girlfriend in an "unprovoked act of domestic violence" ... In a somewhat bizarre case, former French lightweight champion **Andre Holyk**, 50, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for a double murder committed while drunk two years ago. Holyk claimed he was drinking with two men, brothers **Guy** and **Jean Ranchoux**, and after one of them pulled a knife on him, Holyk attacked them with a cleaver, striking with more than 20 slashes each. Holyk then tried to treat the men's wounds, but was too intoxicated to successfully dial a number for help ... In yet another court decision going against a fighter, former welterweight champion **Ike Quartey** lost a breach of contract suit against his former promoter, **AB Stars Productions**, in early-May. Manhattan Supreme Court Justice **Charles Edward Ramos** ruled that Quartey broke his contract when he refused to show up for a 1998 bout promoted by AB Stars, and was therefore not entitled to the $1.25-million remaining on the contract ... Two promising boxers were injured in strange incidents in mid-May. British junior lightweight **Michael Gomez** was stabbed in the shoulder following a training session, supposedly without provocation, but was not seriously hurt. And South African featherweight **Cassius Baloyi** was shot in the leg by three men trying to hijack his BMW and had to undergo surgery to repair the wound ... Pound-for-pound king **Sugar Shane Mosley** didn't exactly do the sport of boxing proud when he participated in ABC's *Superstars* competition in late-May. The undefeated welterweight finished 11th out of 12 contestants in the annual athletic competition ... And 1940s Pennsylvania lightweight champion **Billy Maher** died of pneumonia in late-May at the age of 85. Maher, who twice fought former welterweight champion **Marty Servo**, earned the nickname "Willie Everdrop" because he was never kayoed in more than 100 professional bouts.



Quartey: Loses court case

THE PUNCHLINES

"It's $40 even. Not $39.95. I guess the cable systems have finally run out of nickels."

—TVKO's Mark Taffet, on the pricing for the Oscar De La Hoya-Francisco Castillejo pay-per-view

"He don't want to do it again. I'll tear his ass up."

—Charles Brewer, on the possibility of a rematch to his controversial loss to Antwun Echols

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

(For period ended June 5, 2000)

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Welterweight
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Middleweight
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Junior Lightweight
4. **ROY JONES**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
   Featherweight
6. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Welterweight
7. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
8. **NASEEM HAMED**
   Featherweight
9. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Junior Flyweight
10. **ERIK MORALES**
    Featherweight

HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No changes.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: Former WBA super middleweight champion Bruno Girard has moved up to 175 pounds and is installed at number eight. This pushes Antonio Tarver down from eighth to ninth and Greg Wright down from ninth to 10th. Derrick Harmon (10th last issue) is gone.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Girard's move to light heavy made room for former middleweight Antwun Echols to move into the number-four spot among the 168-pounders, thanks to his TKO of Charles Brewer. Brewer is still number five due to the controversial nature of his loss (see "Ringside Reports" for details). Girard's shift also allows Byron Mitchell to advance from fourth to third.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Felix Trinidad jumps from junior middle and lands in the number-two position following his knockout of William Joppy to win the WBA belt. Joppy (second last issue) slips to third, and Armand Krajnc is pushed down a notch to fourth. Syd Vanderpool (eighth last issue) hasn't fought in more than a year and is dropped. This propels Carl Daniels from ninth to eighth and Antonio Perugino from 10th to ninth. Former WBA 154-pound titlist David Reid crashes the 160-pound ranks for the first time at the 10th spot.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: With Trinidad now fighting at middleweight, Fernando Vargas (formerly second) moves into the number-one position. Everybody else rated last issue moves up one place, while Roman Karmazin debuts at 10th.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Micky Ward (eighth last issue) and Terronn Millett (seventh last issue) trade places due to Ward's one-punch kayo of Steve Quinonez.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Jesus Chavez advances from fifth to fourth on the strength of his stirring win over Juan Arias. This causes Steve Forbes to slip from fourth to fifth.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Even though WBC champion Willie Jorrin has been arrested on rape charges, he will not be penalized here unless he is convicted and sentenced to serve enough time to violate THE RING's one-year-inactive rule.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Ricardo Barajas (seventh last issue) exits after being knocked out by third-ranked Veerapol Sahaprom. Barajas' departure elevates Mauricio Martinez (eighth last issue), Genaro Garcia (ninth last issue), and Hugo Dianzo (10th last issue) one notch each. Newcomer Eidy Moya is aboard at 10th.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: In Joo Cho tumbles from fourth to eighth after being knocked out by top-rated Masamori Tokuyama. Diego Morales is replaced at the 10th spot by streaking Martin Castillo.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

STRAWWEIGHTS: No changes.

POUND-FOR-POUND: There was some thought given to demoting Floyd Mayweather (number three) due to his lackluster win over Carlos Hernandez. But as "Pretty Boy" went in with two injured hands, and Roy Jones (fourth) has done nothing to progress since the last ratings, the status quo is maintained. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended June 5, 2001

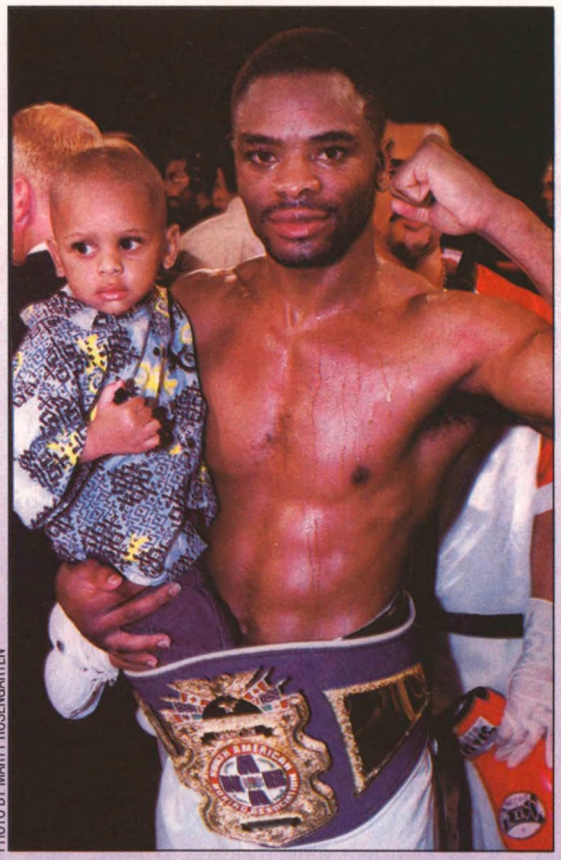


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Antwun Echols crashed the super middleweight ratings at number four

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

In each division, fighters are ranked according to their abilities and accomplishments.

Being champion does not necessarily mean a fighter will be rated at the top of his weight class.

These ratings reflect how the best fighters in the world rate against one another.

Ratings By The Editors

Records By Fight Fax Inc.

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

1. **HASIM RAHMAN** Baltimore, MD *35-2 (WBC/IBF Champ)*
2. **LENNOX LEWIS** England *38-2-1*
3. **MIKE TYSON** Catskill, NY *48-3*
4. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine *36-1*
5. **JOHN RUIZ** Chelsea, MA *37-4 (WBA Champ)*
6. **KIRK JOHNSON** Canada *31-0-1*
7. **DAVID TUA** New Zealand *38-2*
8. **EVANDER HOLYFIELD** Fairburn, GA *37-5-1*
9. **MOUNT WHITAKER** Mission Hills, CA *23-1*
10. **CHRIS BYRD** Flint, MI *33-2*

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

1. **FERNANDO VARGAS** Oxnard, CA *21-1*
2. **WINKY WRIGHT** St. Petersburg, FL *41-3*
3. **HARRY SIMON** Namibia *21-0*
4. **FRANCISCO CASTILLEJO** Spain *51-4 (WBC Champ)*
5. **BRONCO McKART** Monroe, MI *43-3*
6. **YORY BOY CAMPAS** Mexico *77-4*
7. **ALEX BUNEMA** Dallas, TX *19-2-1*
8. **J.C. CANDELO** Denver, CO *23-3-3*
9. **SHIBATA FLORES** Mexico *42-8*
10. **ROMAN KARMAZIN** Russia *27-0-1*

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

1. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA** Mexico *53-3*
2. **NASEEM HAMED** England *35-1*
3. **ERIK MORALES** Mexico *40-0 (WBC Champ)*
4. **GUTY ESPADAS** Mexico *34-3*
5. **DERRICK GAINER** Pensacola, FL *38-5 (WBA Champ)*
6. **FRANKIE TOLEDO** Paterson, NJ *40-5-1 (IBF Champ)*
7. **JOHNNY TAPIA** Albuquerque, NM *49-2-2*
8. **MBULELO BOTILE** South Africa *27-2*
9. **FRED NORWOOD** St. Louis, MO *37-1-1*
10. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** Mexico *35-2*

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

1. **BONES ADAMS** Henderson, KY *41-3-3 (WBA Champ)*
2. **LEHLO LEDWABA** South Africa *33-1-1 (IBF Champ)*
3. **WILLIE JORRIN** Sacramento, CA *28-0 (WBC Champ)*
4. **MANNY PACQUAIO** Philippines *32-2*
5. **ENRIQUE SANCHEZ** Mexico *28-1-2*
6. **ANTONIO CERMENO** Venezuela *38-3*
7. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico *40-3-1*
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE** England *30-1*
9. **CARLOS CONTRERAS** Mexico *17-5-2*
10. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA** Venezuela *18-2-1*

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

1. **TIM AUSTIN** Cincinnati, OH *22-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **PAULIE AYALA** Ft. Worth, TX *32-1 (WBA Champ)*
3. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM** Thailand *31-1 (WBC Champ)*
4. **ADAN VARGAS** Mexico *36-2-1*
5. **JOHNNY BREDAHL** Denmark *49-2*
6. **JORGE LACIERVA** Mexico *19-3-3*
7. **MAURICIO MARTINEZ** Panama *19-3-1*
8. **GENARO GARCIA** Mexico *24-3*
9. **HUGO DIANZO** Mexico *26-6-1*
10. **EIDY MOYA** Venezuela *14-1*

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 190 pounds

1. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ**
   Germany *32-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND *46-3 (WBA Champ)*
3. **VASSILIY JIROV**
   Kazakhstan *28-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England *39-12-1*
5. **MARCELO DOMINGUEZ**
   Argentina *32-3-1*
6. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England *28-5*
7. **ARTHUR WILLIAMS**
   Pensacola, FL *34-5-1*
8. **JAMES TONEY**
   Las Vegas, NV *61-4-2*
9. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   France *42-2*
10. **LOUIS AZILLE**
    Jersey City, NJ *15-0-2*

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight limit: 175 pounds

1. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL *44-1 (WBC/WBA/IBF Champ)*
2. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany *44-0*
3. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadephia, PA *19-1-1*
4. **REGGIE JOHNSON**
   Houston, TX *42-6-1*
5. **MONTELL GRIFFIN**
   Chicago, IL *41-3*
6. **CHRIS JOHNSON**
   Canada *26-2-1*
7. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA *27-0*
8. **BRUNO GIRARD**
   France *39-2-1*
9. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL *17-1*
10. **GREG WRIGHT**
    Bronx, NY *18-6-2*

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales *31-0*
2. **SVEN OTTKE**
   Germany *22-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL *23-1-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA *25-4-1*
5. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA *36-8*
6. **THOMAS TATE**
   Houston, TX *40-6*
7. **DINGAAN THOBELA**
   South Africa *40-8-2*
8. **JAMES BUTLER**
   Bronx, NY *18-1*
9. **GLENN CATLEY**
   England *26-4*
10. **MADS LARSEN**
    Denmark *37-1*

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA *39-2-1 (IBF/WBC Champ)*
2. **FELIX TRINIDAD**
   Puerto Rico *40-0 (WBA Champ)*
3. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. *32-2-1*
4. **ARMAND KRAJNC**
   Sweden *24-0*
5. **KEITH HOLMES**
   Washington, D.C. *35-3*
6. **HASSINE CHERIFI**
   France *31-4-1*
7. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England *32-0*
8. **CARL DANIELS**
   St. Louis, MO *47-3-1*
9. **ANTONIO PERUGINO**
   Italy *17-0*
10. **DAVID REID**
    Philadelphia, PA *16-1*

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

1. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA *37-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Whittier, CA *33-2*
3. **ANDREW LEWIS**
   Guyana *21-0-1 (WBA Champ)*
4. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA *32-0 (IBF Champ)*
5. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark *25-0*
6. **KOFI JANTUAH**
   Ghana *21-0*
7. **DANIEL SANTOS**
   Puerto Rico *24-2-1*
8. **JAMES PAGE**
   Pittsburg, CA *25-4*
9. **RAFAEL PINEDA**
   Colombia *34-3*
10. **SHANNAN TAYLOR**
    Australia *28-1-1*

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

1. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Australia *26-1-1 (WBA/WBC Champ)*
2. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY *26-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. *47-3*
4. **ANTONIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA *35-3*
5. **ENER JULIO**
   Colombia *21-3*
6. **RANDALL BAILEY**
   Miami, FL *23-1*
7. **MICKY WARD**
   Lowell, MA *36-10*
8. **TERRONN MILLETT**
   St. Louis, MO *24-2-1*
9. **BEN TACKIE**
   Ghana *22-2*
10. **HECTOR CAMACHO JR**
    Puerto Rico *32-0*

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

1. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico *42-4-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO *32-2-1*
3. **PAUL SPADAFORA**
   Pittsburgh, PA *33-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **TAKANORI HATAKEYAMA**
   Japan *24-1-3 (WBA Champ)*
5. **ANGEL MANFREDY**
   Gary, IN *36-5-1*
6. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan *32-0*
7. **COLIN DUNNE**
   England *32-1*
8. **JESSE JAMES LEIJA**
   San Antonio, TX *42-5-2*
9. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX *27-2-1*
10. **CESAR BAZAN**
    Mexico *38-4-1*

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI *26-0 (WBC Champ)*
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL *25-0 (WBA Champ)*
3. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil *29-0*
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico *35-1*
5. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV *19-1 (IBF Champ)*
6. **JONGKWON BAEK**
   South Korea *22-1-1*
7. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia *13-2-1*
8. **JOHN BROWN**
   Atlantic City, NJ *23-8*
9. **ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ**
   Mexico *45-4-1*
10. **TONTCHO TONTCHEV**
    Bulgaria *24-0*

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea *24-2-1 (WBC Champ)*
2. **CELES KOBAYASHI**
   Japan *23-4-3 (WBA Champ)*
3. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela *20-3-1 (IBF Champ)*
4. **GERRY PENALOSA**
   Philippines *43-3-2*
5. **JESUS ROJAS**
   Venezuela *34-8-3*
6. **SAMSON TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand *40-0*
7. **ADONIS RIVAS**
   Nicaragua *16-1-1*
8. **IN JOO CHO**
   South Korea *18-2*
9. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia *25-2*
10. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
    Mexico *19-0*

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

1. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI *29-0 (WBA Champ)*
2. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia *25-0 (IBF Champ)*
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand *39-2 (WBC Champ)*
4. **HAWK MAKEPULA**
   South Africa *18-1*
5. **MEDGOEN TOYOTA-THAILAND**
   Thailand *23-1*
6. **SAEN SOR PLOENCHIT**
   Thailand *39-1*
7. **ALEJANDRO MONTIEL**
   Mexico *46-3*
8. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico *22-0-1*
9. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
   Philippines *11-1-1*
10. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
    Venezuela *16-0*

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

1. **RICARDO LOPEZ**
   Mexico *49-0-1 (IBF Champ)*
2. **YOSAM CHOI**
   South Korea *23-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **PICHIT C. SIRIWAT**
   Thailand *23-1*
4. **ROSENDO ALVAREZ**
   Nicaragua *29-2-1 (WBA Champ)*
5. **BEBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia *26-1*
6. **ZOLANI PETELO**
   South Africa *17-2-2*
7. **WILL GRIGSBY**
   St. Paul, MN *15-2-1*
8. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico *26-3-1*
9. **HIDENOBU HONDA**
   Japan *23-1*
10. **NELSON DIEPPA**
    Puerto Rico *20-2-1*

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

1. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand *43-1-2 (WBA Champ)*
2. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico *25-1-1 (WBC Champ)*
3. **ROBERTO LEYVA**
   Mexico *18-0 (IBF Champ)*
4. **KEITARO HOSHINO**
   Japan *21-7*
5. **JOMA GAMBOA**
   Philippines *30-6-1*
6. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela *13-2-1*
7. **WANDEE SINGWANGCHA**
   Thailand *28-4*
8. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia *33-2*
9. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia *24-1*
10. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
    Japan *13-0-3*

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

It was a clean sweep for the Trinidads at this year's Boxing Writers Association of America awards dinner. Felix Jr. was named Fighter of the Year, while Felix Sr. took home the hardware for Manager of the Year and Trainer of the Year. Needless to say, they did pretty well at the Boxing Writers Association of Puerto Rico awards dinner too.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Eager to get a leg up in negotiations to sign the 2012 Olympians, Main Events already has a lock on seven-year-old Angel Bojado, the kid brother of undefeated sensation Francisco "Panchito" Bojado. No truth to the rumor that the WBA is introducing a new 55-pound weight class to soak in some extra sanctioning fees.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

According to the record books, Christy Martin has two losses to her name. But if you ask these two ladies, a more accurate total would be four defeats, as both Belinda Laracuente and Isra Girgrah have dropped debatable decisions to "The Coal Miner's Daughter." Luckily for Martin, boxing isn't a beauty contest; otherwise these girls definitely would have gotten the nod.

PHOTO BY MICHAEL BRANDT

As if George Foreman needs any more endorsement money, here we see the former heavyweight champ cutting the ribbon at the grand opening of a Meineke Auto Center in Weston, Florida, in April. In the background you can see legendary trainer Angelo Dundee, whose charge Muhammad Ali cut Big George's first title reign to ribbons 27 years ago in Zaire.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

After an unsuccessful stint on the "Mad At Max" segment on ESPN2's Tuesday Night Fights, *Lou DiBella decided to call Mr. Kellerman and give him a sample of what "Laughing With Lou" is like. DiBella got a hearty chuckle out of Kellerman's attempts to pin down the former HBO boss' title at DiBella Entertainment.*

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Been wondering why Lou Del Valle hasn't been very active as a fighter the last few years? Here's our answer: The former light heavyweight titlist has been touring with Diana Ross as one of the new Supremes. Whether Del Valle would get to play The Scarecrow in the new Broadway revival of The Wiz *was still uncertain as of press time.*

PHOTO BY RAY BAILEY

"Ooh, where can I get one of those?" New International Boxing Hall of Fame inductee Bill Gallo admires the IBHOF ring of referee Arthur Mercante about a month before the cartoonist's inauguration.

NOSTALGIA CORNER

In an effort to prepare for taking Ezzard Charles' punches prior to their 1949 bout, Gus Lesnevich practices seeing double with twin daughters Georgia and Gillian at his Cliffside Park, New Jersey, home. Charles went on to stop Lesnevich in seven rounds in defense of the NBA heavyweight title.

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

YOU ARE A ROCK, YOU ARE AN ISLAND

TO: Hasim "The Rock" Rahman, linear (and therefore true) heavyweight champion
FROM: Jeff Ryan, concerned observer
RE: title reign and future

Dear Rock,

First of all, let me begin by congratulating you on the biggest boxing upset since a crawling, glassy-eyed soon-to-be rapist was stuffing his mouthpiece in backward in the Tokyo Dome 11 years ago. A wannabe actor, Lennox Lewis, thought you were about as life-threatening as prickly heat, so he prepared for his defense against you on a movie set instead of in a gym. (Blame the celluloid for his cellulite.) And, appropriately, you embedded him in the ground as though he was a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Unfortunately, boxing wouldn't be boxing if a feel-good story such as yours didn't sour quickly. First, there was that traffic accident during your victory parade in Baltimore. (Let's hope that wasn't some kind of omen.) Now, you're being battered by the critics the way you were supposed to have been pummeled by Lewis, all because you had the unmitigated gall to do what you thought was best for your career and your family. Who the hell do you think you are? The heavyweight champ or something?

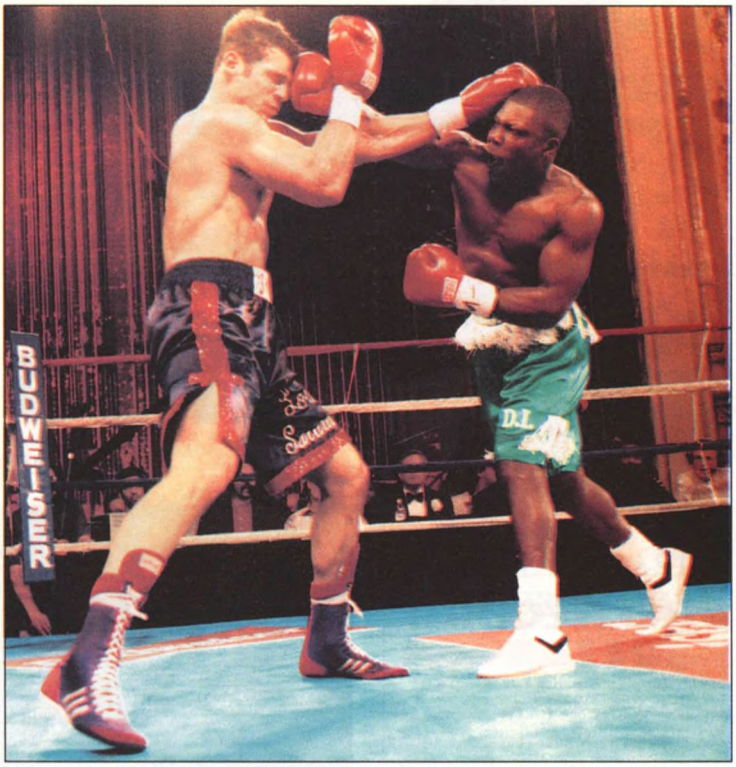
The controversy, of course, has to do with your signing with—gulp!—Don King. To hear your detractors tell it, you might as well have sold your soul to the devil and given the guy with the

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Rahman's deal with King could include a $15-million payday vs. Ruiz

pitchfork all your material possessions, too. Well, let's tell everyone to get a grip for a second while we remind them what the deal brings you: a $5-million payday for an August defense against David Izon on the undercard of Evander Holyfield-John Ruiz III (yes, the linear king appearing in the semi-main event is a sacrilege, but pride takes a back seat to a quick five mil any day). Originally, that was supposed to be followed by a $15-million payday for an alphabet unification clash with the Ruiz-Holyfield victor, but now King is talking about giving Lewis a rematch after the China card.

No sooner was the deal announced, though, than you were being labeled the dumbest guy this side of, well, someone who would undertrain for a heavyweight title defense, hold his hands low, smirk when he got walloped, and eventually get stretched with one punch. That's because you didn't do exactly what the one-track minds at HBO and Showtime, not to mention the cheerleaders in the press room, were hoping you would do. You see, Rock, they all think you're a fluke who ought to accept the role of second-tier warrior, apologize for trying to act like a big shot, and then promptly lose the WBC, IBF, and linear crowns to either Mike Tyson or that tusslin' thespian, Mr. Lewis.



Izon clobbered Savarese three years before Tyson did

HBO Sports boss Ross Greenburg was just dying to sign you to be the Briton's victim in an immediate rematch. Showtime's Jay Larkin was itching to use you as Tyson's batting practice fastball. (So many people wanted to get a piece of The Rock that you must have felt as though your life was a Prudential insurance commercial.) And the press? Let's just say that a whole lot of those supposedly impartial scribes desperately want Tyson on the throne again. Nothing personal, they'd be quick to tell you, it's just that "Leg-Iron Mike" is great copy. The more unstable his behavior, the better the article. And, heck, roller coaster rides are just plain fun.

Surely, you're not chuckling at all the smart-aleck remarks being launched your way (a *New York Post* headline called your contract "Hasim's Blunder A La King"), but you must be amused at some of the hypocrisy, no? Take HBO. The cable giant has hosted title-unification bouts in various weight classes, and has been a strong proponent of one champ per division. Suddenly, however, the network's suits couldn't understand why you originally wanted to waste your time squaring off with the WBA titlist instead of a beltless Lewis. Apparently, HBO is in favor of title unification only when it's televising it.

Then there's the media. The same writers who can't wait to scream about a guy's legal right to earn a living, when they're talking about a violent ex-con or an aging fat man who doesn't belong near a ring, suddenly wish they could control your right to work for whomever you please. These are the same bunch of phonies who would sign with publisher Don King or editor Don King in a second if he offered them a large amount of money for a couple of relatively easy assignments.

Let's face it, Rock, that right-hand bomb of yours sure did screw up a lot of people's plans. Right about now, we were supposed to be waking up to discover that—eureka!—all the political minefields had been tip-toed through, money was once again doing the talking, and Lewis was going to be defending against Tyson after all. You? Uh, you were supposed to be just another one of the Lewis kayo victims whose demise was shown to the Tyson-Lewis pay-per-view audience during the opening montage.

If you ask me, you made the right decision in signing with King. Instead of taking on a tough challenger such as Tyson or Lewis right away, you'll get that less than murderous first defense that heavyweight royalty traditionally enjoys.

Those critics who wonder why you wouldn't immediately jump at the $17-million HBO was offering for a Lewis rematch, or whatever sum Showtime was dangling for a Tyson bout, don't seem to understand that you actually *believe in yourself*. You see no need to make the big score immediately because you're confident that you'll still be around and available for Tyson or Lewis one or two or three fights from now. And guess what? Tyson and Lewis will still be waiting for you, too. And if you're wearing the "undisputed" tag at that time, you'll be able to name your price.

Should you be leery of King? Sure. (For instance, don't ask the boss for *anything*, or you may discover that renting a bath towel can cost you more than the average migrant farm worker earns in a decade.) But who says the sweet-talkers at HBO and Showtime would ever be looking out for The Rock? Even you said, "I just felt that HBO was negotiating on behalf of Lewis, and Showtime was negotiating on behalf of Tyson, but nobody was negotiating on behalf of me."

You negotiated on behalf of you, Rock. And if that makes a lot of people unhappy, so be it. Now, put some cotton in your ears, stop reading the newspapers and magazines, and embark on your reign. In terms of trying to make a name for yourself, landing that nuclear missile on Lewis and then appearing on *The Tonight Show* got you off to a great start. When you can sit down and chat with Jay Leno, who needs Jay Larkin? ■

NEW FACES

JERSON RAVELO

Super Middleweight

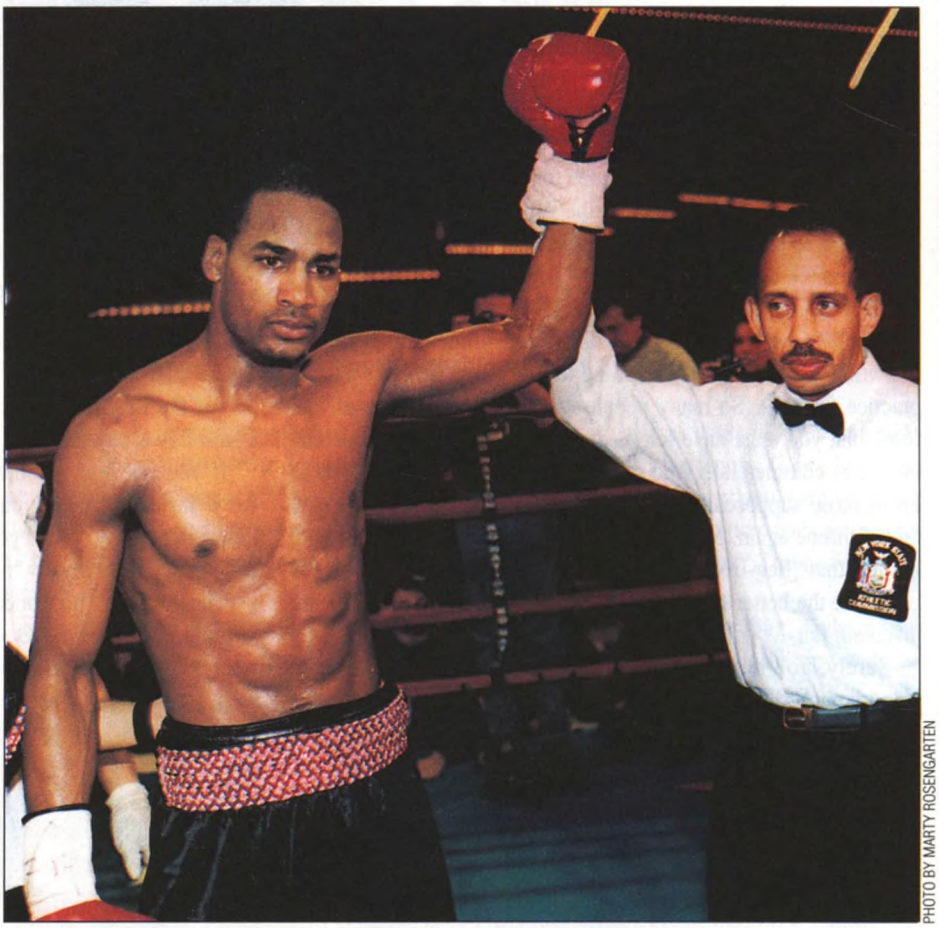


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

PRO RECORD

2001				
Jan. 27	Miguel Gutierrez, New York City	KO 1		
March 14	Enroy Toney, New York City	W 4		
March 30	Thomas Barker, Atlantic City	KO 2		
April 14	Manu Ntoh, New York City	W 4		
May 4	Stacey Williams, Atlantic City	KO 1		
FIGHTS	**WON**	**LOST**	**DRAW**	**KOs**
5	5	0	0	3

By Joe Santoliquito

Jerson Ravelo was nervous that day he left the letter. He had no idea how his father would react to its serious tone. Ravelo had just turned 12, and he had a special birthday wish. Ravelo had always pestered his parents to allow him to box, and writing the letter to his father was his last plea. His father, Zacarias, always thought Ravelo was joking about boxing, until the day he found the note.

In the missive, Ravelo expressed how he wanted to give the sport a try ever since the family left the Dominican Republic. He deserved at least a chance. That was convincing enough for Zacarias to tell his young son he had somewhere to take him. Shortly thereafter, his father dropped him off at a local gym and said, "This is what you wanted."

The skinny Ravelo stood there in the gym doorway—frozen by shock, wondering if this was indeed what he wanted.

"I was scared, because the first thing I saw

(Continued on page 53)

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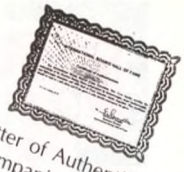

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TRINIDAD vs. HOPKINS

The Biggest Middleweight Fight Since Leonard-Hagler

By Nigel Collins

There's a great irony to all the hype about how the upcoming Felix Trinidad-Bernard Hopkins fight is going to unify the middleweight division for the first time since Sugar Ray Leonard beat Marvelous Marvin Hagler in 1987. Because regardless of who wins, he'll most likely move up in weight in search of a fight with Roy Jones, leaving the 160-pound division as bereft of leadership as before Don King launched his middleweight unification series. But that's part of what makes Hopkins-Trinidad so special. It's both a rare occurrence and a homage to a bygone era when "champion of the world" meant just that—with no alphabet appellation attached. The ghosts of Stanley Ketchel, Harry Greb, Mickey Walker, Ray Robinson, and Carlos Monzon would undoubtedly approve.

But nostalgia isn't what's selling this fight, and the participants are not apparitions from the past. Trinidad and Hopkins are very much of the tactile world, battle-hardened veterans who have proven themselves worthy of such a significant stage through the power of their accomplishments. Besides millions of dollars, the winner will walk away with the Sugar Ray Robinson trophy, THE RING's undisputed championship belt, and the honor of carrying on the legacy of the aforementioned middleweight legends.

If anything is missing from the Trinidad-Hopkins bout, it's the sense that it might not be as competitive as some of the great middleweight wars of yesteryear. Even though Hopkins wears a menacing-looking hood into the ring and calls himself "The Executioner," there's a general feeling that *he's* the one who should be thinking about his final meal and wondering whether or not he wants to be blindfolded before answering the bell for the most important bout of his career.

It's easy to understand this kind of reasoning. After all, Trinidad has looked absolutely sensational since abandoning the welterweight division and moving up, first to the 154-pound class, and then to full-fledged middleweight. Images of David Reid, Fernando Vargas, and William Joppy being brutally splattered all over the ring canvas are vivid in the mind's eye. A feared and respected champion since he won the IBF welterweight title back in 1993, "Tito's" stature has soared to almost mythical proportions in recent years, and he will deservedly enter the ring against Hopkins as a prohibitive favorite.

Still, it would be foolish to dismiss Hopkins out of hand. The blue-collar IBF/WBC champion from Philadelphia is a throwback, an old-school warrior with a junkyard dog mentality. Anyone expecting him to be cowed by the savage fashion with which Trinidad annihilated Joppy will be disappointed. In fact, Hopkins seemed delighted at the postfight press conference, partly because his contract called for an extra $1-million if Trinidad turned out to be his opponent in the final, but also because he's eager to prove himself against the very best.

"I'm glad Trinidad looked so good," said Hopkins. "I feel like I just hit the lottery. But he had the perfect opponent. You don't run from Trinidad. That gets his adrenaline pumping. Me, I like to fight on the inside. Let's see what happens when I get right up in his face. I'm going to turn it into an alley fight and see who survives that."

Of course, getting "right up in Trinidad's face" isn't the easiest thing in the world to do. In order to get close enough to wage the sort of trench warfare Hopkins envisions, he'll first have to get past Trinidad's expansive arsenal.

The foremost thing that comes to mind when discussing Trinidad's punching prowess is, of course, his wicked left hook,

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

a devastating punch that is responsible for the majority of the 33 knockouts he's tallied in an unblemished, 40-bout career. His hook is a thing of beauty, a deadly missile launched with effortless grace. Unlike some left hook artists, he doesn't have to wind up to throw it with maximum potency. It's just suddenly there, impacting on his victim's chin almost faster than the eye can follow.

But Trinidad is far from a one-handed fighter. Remember the sizzling right that put Pernell Whitaker on his butt? Or how about the series of similar shots that had Oscar De La Hoya on the run the final three rounds of their controversial 1999 encounter. Against Joppy, Tito started out using his right to set up the hook, but in the end, the right was working so well, he finished the job with it, sending the defending WBA champion down for the third and

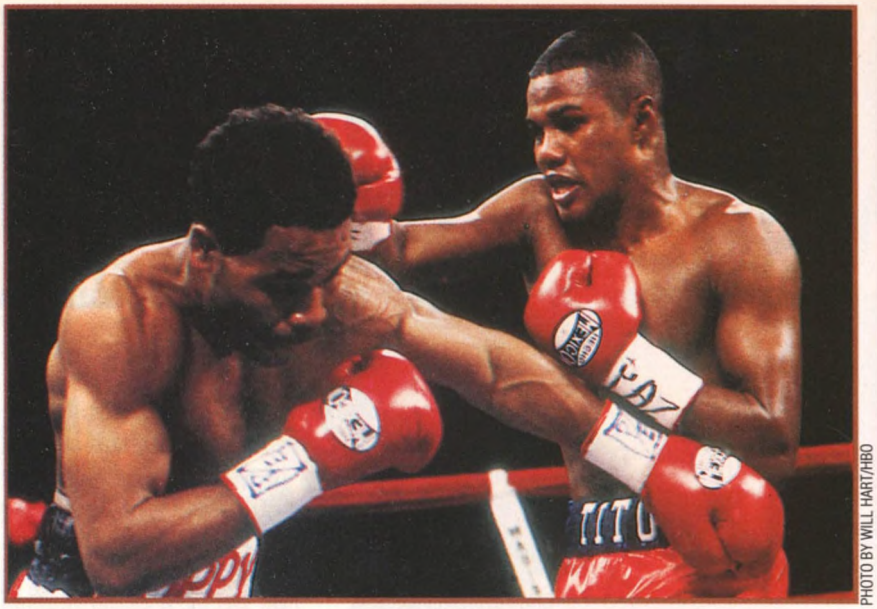


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Trinidad plows a right hand into William Joppy's head en route to a fifth-round knockout victory, earning the right to face Hopkins in the final match of Don King's middleweight unification tournament at Madison Square Garden on September 15.

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO

The Latino fiesta that Felix Trinidad's fights have become started hours before the first bell sounded for his fight with WBA middleweight champion William Joppy at Madison Square Garden. With most of the 18,235 fans in attendance solidly in Trinidad's camp, the music, chants, and cheers overshadowed the preliminaries, creating a nonstop cacophony that reached a deafening level by the time their hero finally ducked between the ropes.

Defending champion Joppy, 158¾, Silver Spring, Maryland, had sounded confident in the days leading up the fight, and there were even a few misguided members of the media who had picked him to follow in the footsteps of Marco Antonio Barrera and Hasim Rahman by springing the third major upset of the year. But most of Joppy's self-assurance must have vanished when a left hook deposited him on the floor late in the first round. He beat referee Arthur Mercante Jr.'s count, but probably wouldn't have survived the round had the bell not sounded shortly after Trinidad resumed his assault.

Joppy, 30, seemed to have his legs back under him in the briskly fought second, and did enough to win the round on one of the three official scorecards. Joppy also had another decent round in the third—the only one he won on THE RING's tally sheet—as he connected with jabs and a few medium-caliber combinations.

Trinidad, 159½, Cupey Alto, Puerto Rico, regained total control in the fourth, sending Joppy down again, compliments of another cruel left hook. The stricken champion stumbled and fell again as he struggled to regain his feet, but he righted himself in time, and was allowed to continue. A hook to the body forced Joppy to grab, and a pair of rights caused him to

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Trinidad's right rocks Joppy

final time with two consecutive rights.

Actually, there's no punch the 28-year-old Trinidad hasn't mastered. He also has a punishing jab and a teeth-rattling uppercut, giving him all the weapons he needs to fight effectively from either long range or on the inside. But even with all that going for him, it hasn't been punching power alone that has made Trinidad the greatest Puerto Rican fighter of all-time and a future Hall of Famer. He's also been well-schooled in the fundamentals by his father, Don Felix, and can box almost as well as he can puneh.

The single-minded seriousness with which Trinidad takes his craft ensures that he never runs out of gas, even in the toughest of fights. Don't forget that it was De La Hoya who faded down the stretch, not Tito, which was even more impressive when you take into consideration that

Anybody who thinks Trinidad doesn't have anything to fear from Hopkins' punches didn't see "The Executioner's" knockout of Joe Lipsey. Hopkins devastated his previously unbeaten challenger with a brutal combination to tally a fourth-round kayo.

sag at the knees, but he somehow lasted the round.

Courageous to the end, Joppy came out firing in the fifth and managed to land several punches before Trinidad opened up with his finishing barrage. A few more hooks flashed home, and as Joppy backed away, Trinidad stepped in with a hard right to the head that pitched his adversary over sideways. Before he hit the floor, Trinidad applied one last right for good measure. Mercante (USA) stopped the fight at the 2:25 mark without bothering to finish the count, and the screaming multitudes went into a celebratory frenzy.

"He got the better of me tonight," said Joppy, 32-2-1 (24). "I'm a bit discouraged. I've never lost like that before, but I'll be back."

"This is the way I fight," said Trinidad. "I came to give a good demonstration. I look for the knockout. I knew I was going to do this."

Apparently, so did most of the crowd that made it the highest drawing non-heavyweight fight since the Garden reinstated boxing at the fabled arena in 1995, and the third-highest grossing fight in Garden history.

Television: TVKO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(5-12-01)

—NC

Trinidad was still weakening himself to make the 147-pound welterweight limit at the time. And please forget all that nonsense about a natural middleweight being too big or too strong for him. Although Joppy is broader through the shoulders and back, it made no difference whatsoever after Trinidad's first hook found his chin.

Hopkins, on the other hand, has often been described as a fighter who isn't great at any one particular aspect of the game, but who is, instead, very good at practically all of them. And while that's true as far as it goes, it's not an entirely accurate assessment, because Hopkins *is* great at taking what he has and making the very best possible use of it, which is no small accomplishment when you think about all the super-talented fighters who never live up to their potential.

A profound desire to achieve, coupled with mental toughness, a herculean work ethic, and a firm grasp of boxing basics have carried Hopkins a long way since he got out of prison in 1987 and turned his life around. Although not as ruinous a puncher as Trinidad, Hopkins isn't exactly tossing marshmallows out there, as his 28

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Who will be the last man standing? King hypes the upcoming Hopkins-Trinidad showdown at the press conference following "Tito's" kayo of Joppy at Madison Square Garden.

stoppages in a 39-2-1 with 1 no-contest record indicates. And as anybody who saw his knockouts of Steve Frank and Joe Lipsey (who never fought again) knows, he can get rid of opponents in a nanosecond if he catches them right. Trinidad would be ill-advised to discount the sharpness of The Executioner's axe.

Hopkins is a remarkable physical specimen for a 36-year-old prize fighter, and judging by his comprehensive 12-round decision over Keith Holmes to win the WBC title in April, his hand and foot speed are as good as ever. And while he steadfastly denies it—tongue lodged firmly in cheek—he's incorporated more roughhouse tactics into his game in recent years. Whether this has come about through circumstance or as a hedge against the encroachment of Father Time is difficult to say. Whatever the case, Hopkins' no-holds-barred approach will probably play a prominent role against Trinidad.

Okay, so Hopkins is a genuine tough guy; everybody acknowledges that. But does he actually have a realistic chance of

THE MEN BEHIND THE CHAMPS

Although they've taken vastly different routes to their September 15 showdown, Trinidad and Hopkins share more than a desire to unify the middleweight title. Among the things they have in common is their absolute faith in the individuals who have helped them hone their skills to a point where they now stand on the brink of their greatest achievements. Like Marvelous Marvin Hagler before them, this pair of middleweight titlists have stuck with the same trainer throughout their entire professional careers.

Felix Trinidad Sr. has always been his son's guiding light not only in a training capacity, but also as his manager. A former pro himself, Don Felix knows the pitfalls that await any fighter, especially one who makes as much money as his namesake, and has done a terrific job of steering "Tito" through the mine fields of professional boxing.

The elder Trinidad is a strict disciplinarian who insists that there are no distractions whatsoever when his son is preparing for a match. At times, this has displeased the media, but nobody can complain about the results. Just as important to the success of their relationship,

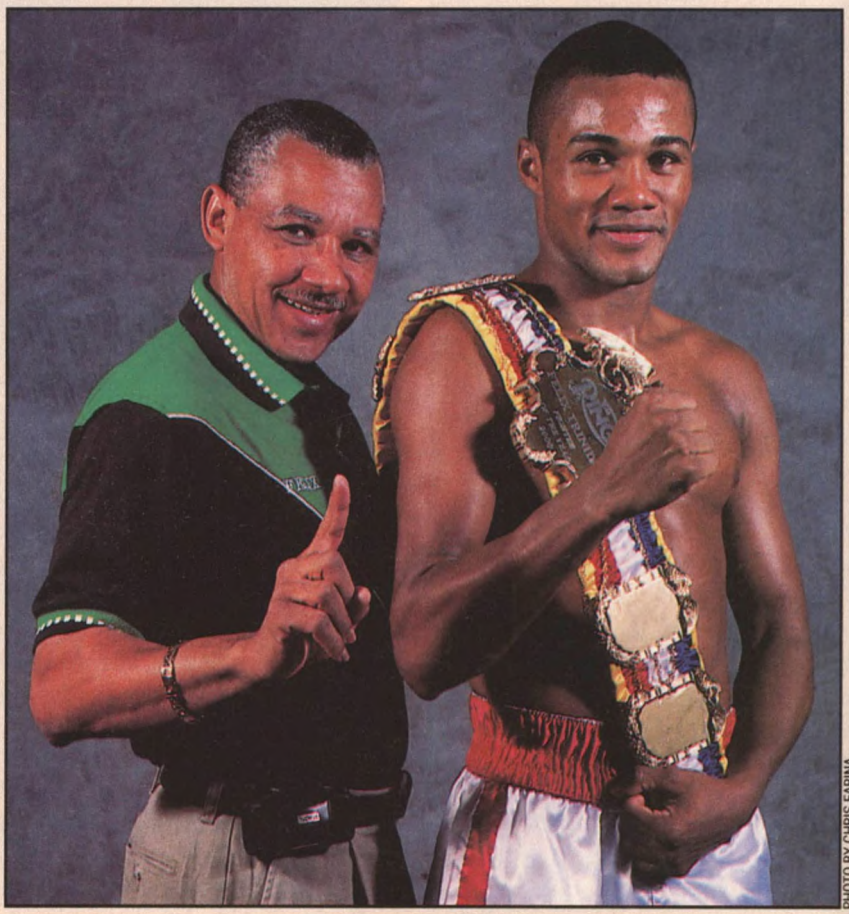


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Don Felix and Tito have earned millions together

upsetting Trinidad? Well, ask yourself the following: What do Alberto Cortes, Anthony Stephens, Yory Boy Campas, Oba Carr, Kevin Lueshing, David Reid, and Fernando Vargas have in common? That's right; they all knocked down Trinidad, leading to the widely held belief that Tito's chin is not on the same lofty level as the rest of his game.

True, to date the Puerto Rican puncher has always climbed back up and carried on to win, but how many times can you teeter on the edge of the cliff without falling off? To make things even more worrisome for Trinidad supporters, it must be admitted that Hopkins is a far more accomplished fighter than any of the men who have previously put Tito on the deck. He's also a pretty good finisher, and it's not inconceivable that Hopkins might be the guy to consummate what others could only start. He's not going to back off and admire his handiwork if he puts Trinidad on the deck; that's for sure.

Besides an unreliable chin, Trinidad has no other glaring deficiencies. In the past, he had a well-earned reputation as a slow starter, a rap that was reinforced when Reid toppled him with a right hand in the third round of their March 2000 bout. Nonetheless, in his last two starts, against Vargas and Joppy, Tito floored his foes in the opening round, so perhaps that's a defect that Trinidad has finally overcome.

While far from a catcher, Hopkins is no Willie Pep on defense. Yes, he's become more and more of a cutie as the years roll by, but he will be hit by Trinidad; there's little doubt about that. The question is whether or not he'll be hit flush by Tito's best shot, and if he is, whether he can take it better than those who went before him. Hopkins has been a durable, sturdy-chinned fighter throughout his career, but it's come to the point where you have to wonder if any fighter outside of the heavyweight division can stand up to Trinidad's thunderous blows.

"I never thought he could hit like that," said Joppy after thrice picking himself up off the Madison Square Garden canvas. "I didn't think he would have that much power coming up from 154 pounds to 160. I have never been hit like that before."

But regardless of whether Trinidad-Hopkins turns out to be as one-sided as Trinidad-Joppy, or is instead a combination of Greb-Walker, Zale-Graziano, and Hagler-Hearns rolled into one, for the time being, at least, the Sweet Science will have just one man atop boxing's most prestigious division below heavyweight. That in and of itself is reason to celebrate, even if the party only lasts until the winner's next fight. ■

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Fisher has been with Hopkins for 13 years

the father doesn't try to run his son's life outside of boxing, despite the Svengali-like control some mistakenly believe he holds over Tito.

"I don't interfere," Don Felix told *Sports Illustrated* shortly before the Joppy fight. "I give him his space."

The recognition Don Felix has gained through his association with his son has made him a much sought-after trainer, and he has recently enjoyed success with the undefeated duo of heavyweight Fres Oquendo and featherweight Daniel Seda.

Bouie Fisher, who has been with Hopkins on a handshake agreement for the past 13 years, was one of the few people who believed in the fighter when he was released from jail after serving a sentence for strong-arm robbery. A few years later, when Hopkins lost his job scrubbing pots and pans at a Philadelphia hotel because the boss discovered he was an ex-con, Fisher gave him a job at the transmission repair shop he then owned, even though Hopkins told him he didn't know anything about cars. Fisher's generosity only strengthened their bond, and Bouie's son, James Fisher, now serves as Hopkins' aide-de-camp.

A native of South Carolina, Fisher, now a robust 73, moved to Philadelphia when he was 12, where he enjoyed a successful amateur career that included four bouts with Hall of Famer George Benton. Fisher abandoned a pro career after just a handful of fights in order to raise a family, and eventually turned to training. Besides Hopkins, he currently works with Ivan Robinson and Calvin Davis. Fisher was also the original trainer of Jesse Ferguson, and was in his corner the night Ferguson beat future heavyweight champion Buster Douglas.

"Bouie's closer to me than my own father," said Hopkins. "I learned the value of loyalty on the street, where if two guys do something wrong, and one gets caught, he's not supposed to snitch on the other. Now I'm applying that same loyalty in a good way."

—NC

20 The TRINIDAD-HOPKINS Showdown!

Insiders Tell You Who's Going To Win

ERIC BOTTJER (Cedric Kushner Promotions matchmaker): "Trinidad will win, but not like he beat Joppy. I think Hopkins has slowed down. His reflexes aren't there anymore. He's winning more on his will and conditioning than skill. But Trinidad also has tremendous will. I don't think Hopkins will be able to break down Trinidad like he has the other guys he's fought."

LUCIA RIJKER (female boxer): "Trinidad has a good fighting rhythm and spirit right now. He is so determined to win that anyone going against him would have to be lucky to beat him. Trinidad is untouchable, he's in his prime right now. I don't see him losing."

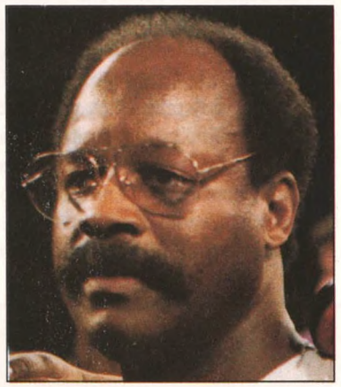
Rijker thinks Trinidad is "untouchable"

STEVE KIM (writer for Maxboxing.com): "Because of the sheer dominance Trinidad showed over Joppy, I think people will diminish Hopkins' chances. I don't. I think Hopkins will play to his strengths, fighting inside, staying inside Trinidad's reach, and continue moving to his left. I see Hopkins winning by late-round knockout."

SCOTT SHAFFER (writer for Fightnews.com): "Bernard Hopkins has tremendous heart, but based on what I saw Trinidad do to Joppy, I don't think Hopkins has the skills to beat Trinidad. I could see Hopkins refusing to go down and losing by a late-round disqualification."

MAX KELLERMAN (ESPN2 boxing analyst): "Trinidad will win. If you look at Hopkins' record, who has he beaten? Trinidad has looked spectacular against A-level guys. Trinidad-Hopkins is a way better fight than Trinidad-Joppy. Off the top of my head, I'd say Trinidad wins by a decision. Then again, that's the same thing I thought about Trinidad and Joppy, and look what happened."

AL MITCHELL (trainer of IBF welterweight champion Vernon Forrest): "The thing you have to remember about Bernard Hopkins is that it's not his style that makes him tough, it's his mentality. Bernard is going to make this a junkyard fight. Hopkins is not going to make the mistakes William Joppy did. Joppy never recovered after that first round. Hopkins will know what to do. It won't be a pretty fight, but I think Bernard can beat Trinidad. It's a matter of who imposes their will, and Bernard has the strongest mentality of the middleweights."



Mitchell believes Hopkins' "mental toughness" will prevail

HOWARD EASTMAN (middleweight contender): "I've only seen one of them fight in person, that was when Trinidad took apart Joppy. But based on what I saw, Trinidad seems more powerful and hungrier than Hopkins."

JOHN RUIZ (WBA heavyweight champion): "Tito will win because he's the best fighter in the world today. He'll come in prepared and in shape against Hopkins. It's just a matter of Tito having more skills."

DAN RAFAEL (*USA Today* boxing writer): "Looking at the Joppy fight, you have to like Trinidad against Hopkins. Tito is getting better as he puts on weight, and has proven he can handle different styles. Hopkins better watch out. He might not have the kind of power that can get Trinidad's respect."

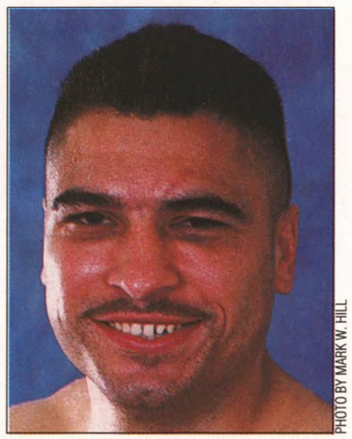


PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

WBA heavyweight boss Ruiz says Tito has "more skills"

ADRIAN DAVIS (trainer of WBC/IBF heavyweight champ Hasim Rahman): "Trinidad has proven he can do everything. I kind of like Trinidad because he's busier than Hopkins and he's in shape. I'm going to go with youth and ability, plus Trinidad fights likes he's scared to lose."

BERNARD FERNANDEZ (*Philadelphia Daily News* boxing writer): "I like Bernard to win. Hopkins will make the fight at close range and smother Trinidad, preventing Tito from getting the punching room he needs. Any space between Trinidad and Bernard means trouble for him. Bernard will have to make this a brawl; he'll have to stay close on Trinidad's chest. Given the mentality of both guys, I could see Bernard winning by late-round stoppage."

Fernandez can see Hopkins "winning by late-round stoppage"

WALLY MATTHEWS (*New York Post* columnist): "Trinidad will win because he's the best fighter in boxing and he's the toughest athlete to defeat in any sport today. The other thing is, Trinidad is getting better the bigger he gets. Bernard is durable, but I don't know if he'll be able to withstand Trinidad's power over 12 rounds. It'll be a stoppage the second half of the fight."

KURT EMHOFF (writer for Maxboxing.com): "Hopkins will win. Trinidad looked absolutely tremendous against Joppy, but Hopkins won't stand around and get hit like Joppy did. Bernard will make it an ugly fight, a streetfight. He'll try to break Trinidad's rhythm. Hopkins will win by decision or a DQ."

BILL RHODEN (*New York Times* columnist): "Based on what I saw Trinidad do against Joppy, I'd have to pick Trinidad. His power, speed, and accuracy of punches are what make him great. Trinidad will do whatever it takes to win, but I do see a Hopkins-Trinidad fight going longer than Joppy-Trinidad, with Trinidad winning again."

ZAB JUDAH (IBF junior welterweight champion): "Tito Trinidad is the truth, there's no doubt about that. Bernard has to play his cards right, box smart against a guy like Trinidad. You hate to go against Trinidad, but Bernard's experienced. If he sticks to a game plan and boxes, I think Bernard can win."

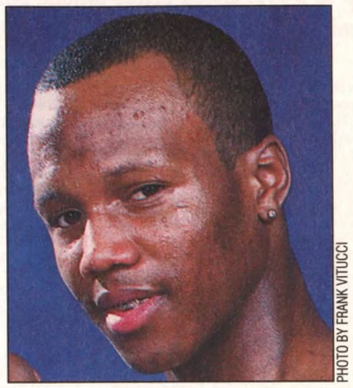


PHOTO BY FRANK VITUCCI

Judah contends that Hopkins can win if he "sticks to a game plan"

CHRIS THORNE (*Newark Star-Ledger* boxing writer): "I love Bernard, but after seeing what Trinidad did to Joppy, I just can't see Bernard winning. I see Bernard maybe lasting seven or eight rounds. Trinidad is just too awesome."

RON BORGES (*Boston Globe* boxing writer): "I like Trinidad because he's younger and faster. It will be a different fight for Trinidad, though, because Bernard is experienced and tricky, and he does things on the edge of the rules. But in the end, if you can't back Trinidad up, you won't be able to beat him."

TIM SMITH (New York *Daily News* boxing writer): "As much as I like Bernard, from what I saw Trinidad do to Joppy, Trinidad is just like a machine. The best way to bust up a machine like that is blow off the wheels. I don't know if Bernard can do that. Trinidad is like creeping death. Eventually, he catches up to you and you pay."

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Smith says Trinidad is "like creeping death"

MICHAEL KATZ (HouseOfBoxing.com columnist): "As of the Joppy fight, you have to say Trinidad would beat Hopkins. I don't care what the Trinidads said before the Joppy fight, I always thought Bernard Hopkins was the best middleweight in the world. That'll change. I think Trinidad should win, I just don't know how."

TOTALS: Trinidad 15, Hopkins 5 ■

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"KING ME," SAYS RAHMAN

Inside Boxing's Ultimate Checkers Game

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

King and Rahman were all smiles at the Felix Trinidad-William Joppy postfight press conference. The following Monday, King made their partnership official, announcing that he had signed the new heavyweight champion to a deal that could mean as much as $75-million to "The Rock."

By Johnnie Whitehead

Don King is like the unwanted person who always manages to wiggle his way into a photo and screw it all up. He hasn't been invited, and no one knows why he's there, but he's *always* there, even if he's just floating in the background. So it should come as no surprise that whenever there's a heavyweight worth having, King will be in the middle of it all saying "cheese," while everybody else cringes.

He did it with George Foreman, Muhammad Ali, Larry Holmes, a litany of faceless heavies in the 1980s, Mike Tyson, and Evander Holyfield. Now, he has done it again. Or so it seems.

Not long after Hasim Rahman rocked the boxing world with his fifth-round knockout of Lennox Lewis, King worked

more of his sleight-of-hand magic, though some say it was more of the underhanded variety. While HBO and Showtime were busy trying to outbid one another for Rahman's services, King pulled off one of the biggest heists of his career and walked away with his mitts on the crown jewel of boxing—the heavyweight championship.

When it was announced on May 14 that Rahman had dumped longtime promoter Cedric Kushner, signed with King, and would be fighting on an August 4 card in China, all hell broke loose. Even before the signing, allegations, lawsuits, and countersuits began flying like panties at an N'Sync concert.

•The WBC, responding to a lawsuit from mandatory challenger Mike Tyson, announced it would not sanction an immediate rematch between Rahman and Lewis.

•The IBF was sued by mandatory contender David Tua, who demanded the that the organization abide by its rules and prevent an immediate Rahman-Lewis rematch. The suit also asked that Rahman be stripped for allowing the rematch clause in the fight contract in the first place.

Then, after the signing:

•Kushner, who already has a case against King pending in the U.S. Supreme Court that stems from King's attempt to sign Rahman in 1998, is back in court, suing King and Rahman for tortuous interference.

•Lewis is suing in an effort to enforce the rematch clause.

As we went to press, Lewis and Kushner were scheduled for a hearing in federal court on June 11, but prior to that, Judge Miriam Cedarbaum had already refused to grant a temporary restraining order to stop Rahman from fighting on the China card.

To say King has been a stick in Kushner's craw would be an understatement. It's never personal with King, just business, especially when it comes to the heavyweight championship. Take the gloves off and hit below the belt, even bite if necessary. It's every promoter for himself.

"All HBO Wanted To Talk About Was Lewis. They Thought Rahman Was The Second Coming Of Buster Douglas."

—Robert Mittleman

"When you're heavyweight champion of the world, Don will make you more money than anybody else," said Rahman's former co-manager Robert Mittleman, who was believed to have helped broker the deal for King. "It was an irresistible deal. We [Mittleman and King] have had our differences, but it's a different time and place. Rahman was going in with all the leverage in the world. All HBO wanted to talk about was Lewis. They thought Rahman was the second coming of Buster Douglas."

But is the King-Rahman deal legal? Although the courts will eventually sort out the mess, according to Eric Bottjer, matchmaker for Cedric Kushner Promotions, it wasn't.

"This wouldn't have been done as clandestine as it was, behind everybody's backs at a hotel 2 o'clock in the morning with a bag of cash like it was a common drug deal, if it was legal," said Bottjer.

The key issue in Rahman's attempt to break his contract with Kushner is a $75,000 payment that Kushner needed to make in order to renew his rights to the fighter. Bottjer and Rahman's co-manager Steve Nelson agree that the payment was due April 12 (nine days before the Lewis fight) and that the check wasn't tendered until April 24. Bottjer, however, says that was for good reason: Rahman went to South Africa to prepare for Lewis on March 26, so, he said, both parties agreed that the payment would be delivered as part of Rahman's purse.

The relationship between Rahman and

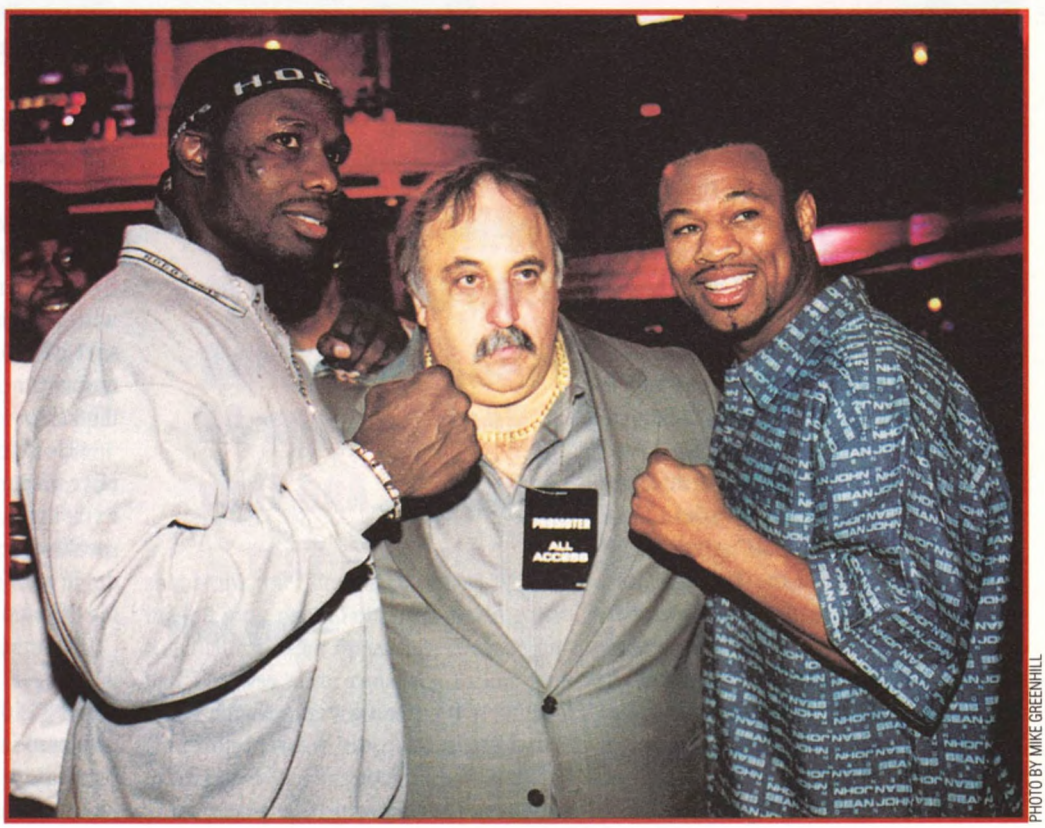

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Rahman poses with Cedric Kushner and Sugar Shane Mosley shortly after returning from South Africa. Rahman has since split with Kushner, and rumors have it that Mosley might be next.

PHOTOS BY FRANK VITUCCI

Out in the cold: Now that King controls the heavyweight crown, it looks like both Lewis and Tyson will have to wait for a crack at their old titles.

Kushner has always been about as stable as Ike Ibeabuchi at a strip joint. Just when things seem to be going in the right direction—Kushner cried uncontrollably the moment Lewis was counted out—their association turned sour again.

Trouble between Rahman and Kushner first surfaced three years ago when Rahman was tempted by King and pulled out of a scheduled fight with Tua, though he still was legally bound to Kushner. Rahman's initial dalliance with King ruined HBO's original TV date, but Kushner and "The Rock" eventually patched things up, and the Tua fight was rescheduled. It took place in December 1998, and disaster struck when Tua landed an after-the-bell left hook in the ninth round and stopped Rahman in the 10th. Since then, the relationship between Kushner and Rahman has been shaky at best.

"These guys aren't pals," said Bottjer of Rahman and Kushner. "They don't go to dinner. It's been a very strange relationship, but we did a great job for Rahman. We promoted 27 of his last 28 fights. He didn't get off the plane from South Africa and declare he was a free agent. If we weren't his promoter in his mind, he would've said that off the bat."

"(King) Speaks The Same Language As The Fighters Do. In A Lot Of Ways, He's Been A Fighter All His Life, And They Relate To That."

—Kery Davis

What amazes many is that King, despite his reputation as a con man who embraces you and picks your pocket at the same time, continues to sign marquee fighters, namely heavyweights. He speaks with a hypnotic razzmatazz and does a sort of boogaloo with words that can numb the minds of the most rational thinkers.

"He's dogged," said Kery Davis, executive vice president of HBO Sports. "He's extremely, extremely persuasive. He speaks the same language as the fighters do. In a lot of ways, he's been a fighter all his life, and they relate to that."

So maybe it was more than the money—a reported $5-million signing bonus ($500,000 of which was in cash, delivered in a duffel bag), and $5-million for David Izon—that drew Rahman's interest. (Next was supposed to be a $15-million showdown with the Evander Holyfield-John Ruiz III winner, but in an

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Heavyweight champion Rahman, Evander Holyfield, King, and WBA titlist John Ruiz are all headed to China for an August card featuring Ruiz-Holyfield III and Rahman's first defense. Several lawsuits have been filed in an effort to stop the show.

attempt to pacify Lewis, King and Rahman called the ex-champ and told him that he'd get his rematch after the Izon bout. A mooted Rahman-Tyson bout, which King said would be worth $30-million to The Rock, remains little more than a tenuous possibility.)

"Don had the best plan," Nelson said. "HBO wanted us to go right to Lewis and Showtime wanted us to go right to Tyson. Exposure is very important. King does generate attention, and the plan is to build and build and culminate in the biggest heavyweight fight in history in relative short order. We're talking about getting this done in 12-15 months. Everyone took Rock for granted when he went to fight Lennox Lewis, and everyone took him for granted when it came to negotiating."

Maybe Rahman took for granted that Kushner would let him go without a fight, but the promoter appears to be putting up a tougher struggle than Lewis. Still, although Kushner had been Rahman's promoter since 1995, there have been questions regarding whose interest he has represented, especially regarding Rahman's controversial loss to Tua.

The Tua bout was an IBF eliminator, with the winner guaranteed an eventual shot at the title. But the controversial ending left most neutral observers feeling that Rahman had been ripped off. Considering that Tua was never penalized for his foul and that Rahman wasn't given additional time to recover, there were plenty of grounds for a protest. A hearing was supposed to be held at the IBF's New Jersey headquarters before the championship committee, but on each occasion the appeal was delayed for one reason or another.

"If (Rahman) Is Unhappy, He Should've Said So, But We're Not Going To Walk Away From The Heavyweight Champion Of The World."

—Eric Bottjer

"Kushner had originally been talking with me, then he bailed out," said Bob Lee Sr., who then was president of the IBF. "I remember him backing off. I don't know why. That's why I was shocked some time later that Rahman was still with him."

Nelson concurs that it was Kushner who blocked a mandated rematch, which, according to Lee, was a distinct possibility considering the circumstances of Rahman's loss. But why would a promoter snuff out his fighter's chance at getting a world title shot?

Nelson's explanation is that Kushner was afraid some underhanded dealings would be exposed during the hearing. Later, during Lee's federal racketeering trial, Kushner admitted that he'd paid money to Lee to influence rankings, though not for Rahman.

Bottjer, however, contends that the reason the rematch never happened was that Rahman's managers didn't like the deal Main Events was offering.

Said Pat English, Main Events' attorney: "I stalled it representing the Tua side, not Cedric. He always agitated for a rematch.

Then the s___ hit the fan about Kushner paying money to the IBF. How could he argue before Bobby Lee when he had admitted he paid money to Bobby Lee?"

The first hearing was scheduled for January 1999, but was delayed because Main Events wasn't given proper notice. A settlement proposal was offered to Kushner on February 8, and he rejected it. The next scheduled hearing, in March, had to be canceled because Lou Duva was undergoing surgery and couldn't attend on Tua's behalf. But a partial agreement was reached when Main Events offered Rahman a spot on the undercard of Michael Grant-Lou Savarese for which he was to be paid $210,000 to face sacrificial lamb Jeremy Williams. It was a supposed good-faith effort to give Rahman an easy payday while negotiations continued for a Tua rematch. Rahman pulled out of the fight, which, in effect, breached the contract.

So who really prevented a Rahman-Tua rematch? With both sides telling conflicting stories, it's impossible at this juncture to tell. Most likely, all parties were playing both ends against the middle in a high-stakes game of boxing politics.

Ultimately, Rahman went on to face Oleg Maskaev, who turned out to be a hell of a lot tougher than Williams. Rahman didn't take the Maskaev fight seriously, and ended up getting knocked out in the eighth round.

During recent negotiations with HBO, Rahman's management felt Kushner was acting on behalf of himself and the network. By giving them Rahman, they reasoned, Kushner would boost his standing for future business dealings.

"We don't need Hasim Rahman to get dates with HBO," countered Bottjer. "It would've benefited us to take him to Showtime. We already have contracts with Shane Mosley and Michael Grant for HBO. If the guy is unhappy, he should've said so, but we're not going to walk away from the heavyweight champion of the world."

And neither will King. ■

Johnnie Whitehead is an editor at USA Today and a regular contributor to this magazine.

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

It has been suggested that the relationship between Rahman and Kushner deteriorated substantially in the aftermath of The Rock's controversial 1998 loss to David Tua. Kushner's failure to secure Rahman a rematch with the Samoan didn't please the future champion.

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HAS THE WIZARD OF KRONK LOST HIS MAGIC WAND?

Steward seems lost in contemplation as Lennox Lewis listens to a question from the media during a press conference held at Lewis' Pocono Mountains training camp. The trainer insists Lewis was in shape for his title-losing fight with Hasim Rahman.

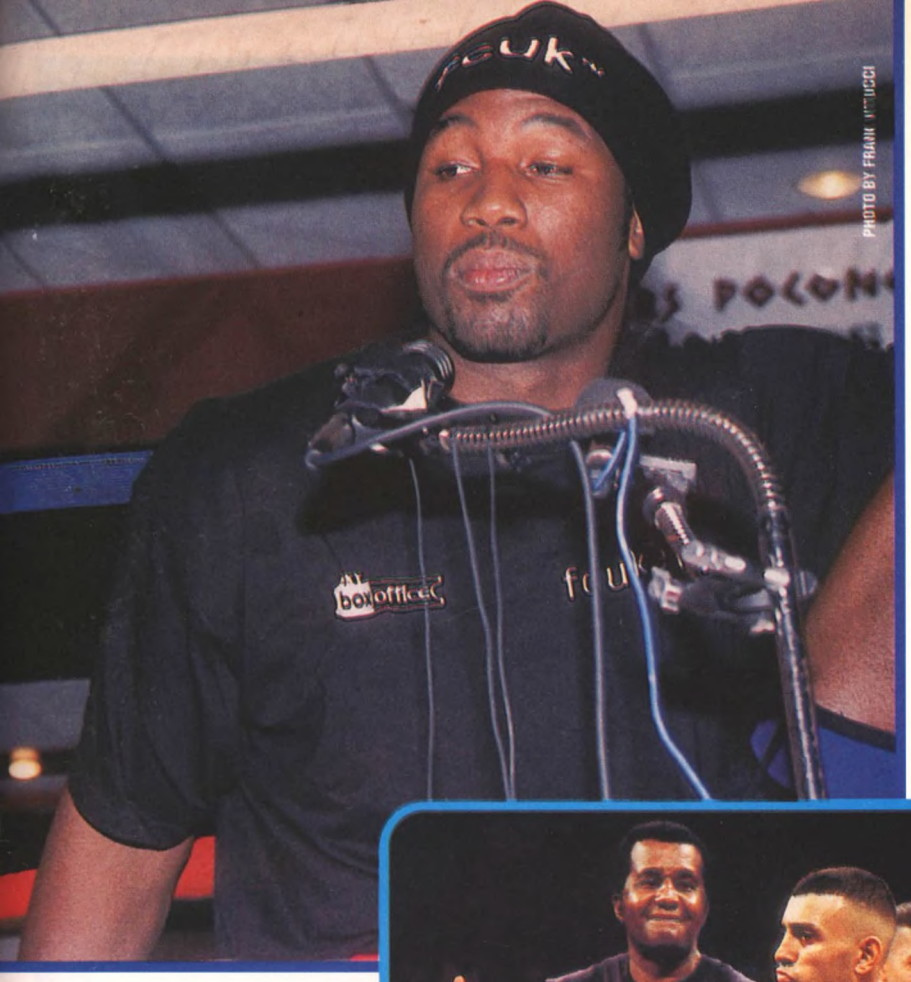
By William Dettloff

The best can't afford missteps the way the rest of us can. They can't have a bad night or a bad week or a streak of crummy luck. The rest of us? No problem. We can make mistakes, screw up, drag a dark cloud behind us for a while. Nobody really cares—if they notice at all. Mediocrity has its rewards. Even if we're engaged in a high-profile profession, if we're not the best there is at what we do, who cares if we have an off night, or an unlucky streak? It's expected. We're flawed. We screw up. We move on.

You don't get the same slack if you're the best. The expectations are higher. It's your own fault, you set them there whether you meant to or not. So if you're not on your game once in a while or if you suffer a bad break or an unfortunate streak, get ready for us mediocre types—who outnumber you a trillion to one—to pounce on you and let you know that we noticed. Your misfortune is big news—not because we dislike you, but because it makes us feel better to know that sometimes even the best don't have it all their way.

Remember when Michael Jordan would have one of his rare bad nights and score 11 or 12 points? It was big news. Same thing happens today when Tiger Woods finishes six strokes behind the leader, or when Ken Griffey Jr. makes an error. We're all over it. It happens in the fight game, too, of course. Wait until Shane Mosley or Roy Jones loses two rounds in a row, or Don King doesn't win a court case or sign the guy he's going after. It'll be big news. That's what happens when you're the best at what you do. You're expected to win—flawlessly, easily, impressively—every time out. When you don't, we're there.

For the last 15 years or so, Emanuel Steward has been among the very best and most successful at what he does. Whether it's been as a hired gun—a role he pretty much created in the fight business—or as the guy who took kids from the Detroit streets to world titles, we associate him with excellence. How couldn't we? He helped Evander Holyfield win the heavyweight title back from Riddick Bowe. He tied a red band around his head and showed Julio Cesar Chavez how to beat Frankie Randall, more or less. He took



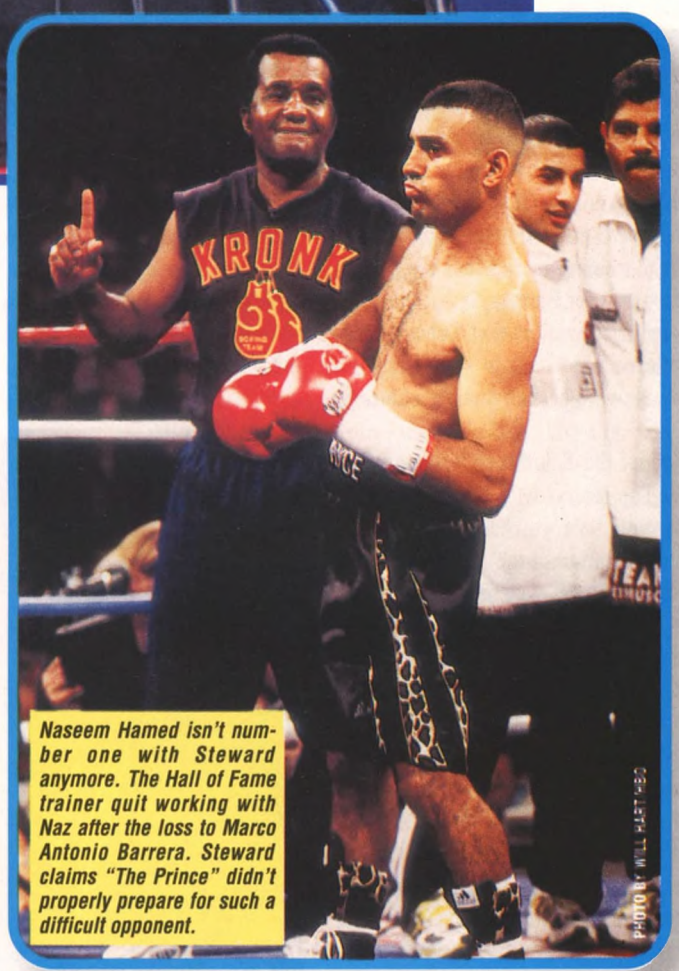
Oliver McCall, an ordinary pug if ever there was one, and taught him how to knock Lennox Lewis flat and become champ of the world. Then he turned Lewis from a big, clumsy oaf of a heavyweight into a pretty fair champion. Oscar De La Hoya never looked better than when Steward was with him, regardless of what Floyd Mayweather Sr. says.

That's just a smattering of what Steward accomplished as a freelancer. What about all those good Kronk fighters he nursed almost from the womb? Tommy Hearns, Hilmer Kenty, Jimmy Paul, Steve McCrory, Duane Thomas, Milt McCrory, Michael Moorer. Solid guys, good fighters all to some degree or another even if they weren't legends (except for Hearns), and Steward took them farther probably than anyone else would have taken them or could have taken them. So we have come to associate him with excellence. Everyone has. He has given us every reason to.

The best lose some too, though. Steward lost when Naseem Hamed and Lewis, his two big guns, dropped big fights within a couple of weeks of one another. Marco Antonio Barrera and Hasim Rahman scored unlikely wins, and suddenly there was Steward, without a champion, without a star, without his guy's arm in the air at the end. For any other trainer, another day at the office. Win some, lose some. For Steward, something altogether different. Foreign. But don't think it unsettling.

"Yes, April was a bad month," Steward said recently, and chuckled when he did. "But in big fights, I had a good run for about 15 years, so it's not that bad."

There was nothing that could be done about Lewis' loss, Steward maintains. "He just got caught with one of the best right hands I've ever seen a heavyweight throw." But Hamed's loss to Barrera was entirely preventable in Steward's educated eyes, and that it occurred regardless was the straw that ended his relationship with the featherweight slugger.



Naseem Hamed isn't number one with Steward anymore. The Hall of Fame trainer quit working with Naz after the loss to Marco Antonio Barrera. Steward claims "The Prince" didn't properly prepare for such a difficult opponent.

"From the start of camp it was all wrong," Steward said. "When it was time to start camp, Naz found this place in Palm Springs he wanted to train at. Now I had been saying all along that Barrera was a very dangerous opponent and I even told Hamed and his brother, 'Look, I really mean this—it's not hype.' Lennox was training for Rahman and normally would have trained in the Poconos at our regular camp, but he knew what a dangerous fight this was for Hamed and agreed to train in Nevada, thinking Hamed was going to end up there too.

"But Naz kept telling me about this place in Palm Springs, so I went down there and checked it out, and I didn't like it. The atmosphere was all wrong. So I told him I was going over to Nevada to train with Lennox and he should come. He said he didn't want to, that he had this beautiful place in Palm Springs. I told him you're right, it's beautiful, but it's got nothing to do with winning fights. He said he wasn't going to change; he would just train there."

Steward went out to Hamed's camp a couple of times to gauge the fighter's progress. He didn't come back happy. "The whole theme of the camp was just not to face reality. They had him sparring with guys that weren't nearly good enough to get him ready for Barrera. I told them about it, and they just ignored it."

Steward arranged to have tape of Barrera's impressive win over Jesus Salud in December sent to co-trainer Oscar Suarez so Hamed could study it and see the Barrera he would be facing. Instead, according to Steward, Hamed's camp insisted on reviewing tapes of Barrera's losses to Junior Jones, and at first denied even having received the Salud tape.

"They didn't want to tell him anything he didn't want to hear," Steward said. "I would rather tell a fighter things he doesn't want to hear and have him win than tell him things he wants to hear and have him

PHOTO BY TEDDY BLACKBURN

Steward with two of his prize pupils, Evander Holyfield and Tommy Hearns. Steward trained Holyfield for the second Riddick Bowe fight, the only one of the thrilling trilogy Commander Vander won.

SUAREZ HAS HIS SAY

Oscar Suarez heard the comments of Emanuel Steward in the aftermath of Naseem Hamed's loss to Marco Antonio Barrera and was baffled. Suarez, who co-trained Hamed for the fight, was annoyed over what he felt were unwarranted verbal attacks by Steward questioning Suarez' training tactics and his professionalism in getting Hamed prepared for Barrera.

Suarez fumed over Steward's allegation that Suarez never watched the Barrera-Jesus Salud tape he had sent Hamed's camp, and he resented the way Steward bashed Suarez' choice of sparring partners.

"First of all, Manny lies about the Salud tape," Suarez contended. "I gave Naz the tape. The reason why Manny said that was because he wasn't even around. We watched the tapes from the first day we were in training camp until the last day. Manny obviously came at a time when we were watching tapes of the Junior Jones fights.

"As for the sparring partners, it's a shame Manny has to talk like that. We used world-rated fighters to spar with, so I don't know why Manny would question who we used. We used a 122-pounder [Carlos Contreras] who was quicker than Barrera. The only guy Manny was going to bring us had about seven or eight fights. He didn't have anyone else."

Suarez also bristled at Steward's notion that he acted as nothing more than a "yes man" for Hamed.

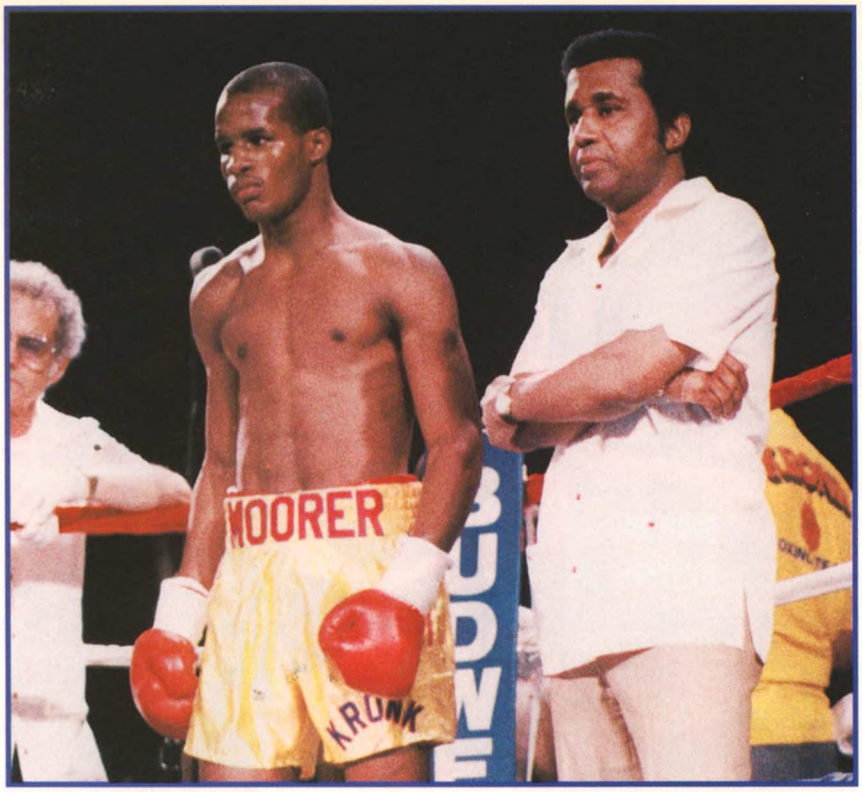
"Before, Naseem used to click his fingers, and everyone jumped," Suarez said. "Not with me. I'm not the type of guy who lets his fighters do what they want to do. I want all of my fighters to give 100 percent, because I give 100 percent.

"The real reason I didn't talk in the corner during the Barrera fight was because I didn't want to confuse Naseem any more than he was. I don't think Manny was the legendary man in the corner that night. I think he was more desperate than the fighter. I could see Naseem was confused.

"I still hold Emanuel in the highest esteem. I'd like to talk to Emanuel one day and ask him why he said all of those things. I have great respect for the man, and I always will. My only thing with Emanuel is that I wanted that same respect shown to me. I don't think I got it."

—Joe Santoliquito

Naz works the pads with Suarez



Steward with the skinny, light heavyweight version of Michael Moorer in 1989. Steward, who is prouder of his work as a manager than as a trainer, both trained and managed Moorer at the time.

lose. At the end I became just a figurehead. I had no control, no influence. I've been in this business too long and have too much experience and knowledge to let it go to waste like that. So it was better for everyone that I moved on. I still think Naz is one of the most talented fighters I've worked with and I still really like him. He's one of my favorites. But you must be able to hear things that are negative if they will help you win a fight."

The Lewis loss? An entirely different story, and not, according to Steward, the one you keep reading about.

"Lennox was in shape," Steward said. "He did everything he was supposed to do and just a couple of days before the fight was running five miles, boxing well in the gym. The altitude had nothing to do with it."

Steward emphatically denies rumors that fringe contender Lamon Brewster dropped Lewis in the gym—"Lennox was kicking his ass every day"—or that Lewis was tired after the first round against Rahman, despite how it appeared to viewers. "I talked to him in between rounds. He wasn't out of breath."

So what happened?

"It's like when a really experienced pool player is playing a bunch of kids who don't know what they're doing," Steward explained. "The experienced guy relaxes, he doesn't concentrate as hard, and he plays around a little. Pretty soon he's playing at their level, not the way he would against another guy who is at his level. Lennox got caught because he was just playing with the guy. End of story."

Don't think for a moment that his streak of bad luck has Steward fretting. If anything, it has invigorated him. The situation with Hamed in particular was the impetus to make him examine where he was in his career and what makes him fulfilled professionally. The result?

"My career as a hired gun looks like it's coming to an end. I've had great success, but I like having control and, as a trainer, you just don't have much, especially with these so-called superstars."

The answer, for Steward at least, is to return home to stay, to Detroit, to Kronk, and to manage and train guys from the ground up. Like in the good old days.

"The only way to really do it right," he said, "is for me to manage and train together, just like I used to." Steward revealed that he's working with some investors to come up with a couple of million dollars they'll use to sign young prospects. Already he's signed Octavio Lara, a promising Detroit welterweight, and featherweight prospect Sugar Rey Beltran. Steward looks forward to getting back into the managing end of the business.

"I've been in boxing for 48 years and have been extremely successful. I've built a lot of relationships with a lot of people all over the world. I've acquired a lot of knowledge and it's too much to waste by just training guys. At this point I'd rather just take my time and develop my own fighters.

"When I work with these other managers now, they're intimidated and uncomfortable around me because they remember me as a manager. Plus, I do everything for my fighters in terms of making all of the arrangements, meeting with officials. I know all of the presidents of the ruling bodies and the commissions and all the politics that go on. I handle all of that stuff, and that's not the job of the trainer."

Steward will continue to work with Lewis, whom he calls a true professional.

"Lennox looks for the hardest sparring partners he can find. He works hard all the time in the gym and we work really well together as a team. He's a professional. When you tell him to go out and run at six in the morning, you can bet he'll be out there at six."

But Lewis will be the only fighter Steward just trains. His heart is in the managing, and he is most proud not of what he's made happen in the gym or the corner, but at the negotiating table, over lunches, on the phone, and in elevators. His favorite example of his managing ability involves former heavyweight champion Michael Moorer.

"When Michael was an amateur, we trained him for a while and I took a liking to him. John Davimos and I signed him to a managerial contract, and everyone told me he was nothing special. Everyone told me I was crazy. I turned him pro in March of 1988. In December '88 he was the new [WBO] light heavyweight champion. That was managing ability. Not just training, but managing.

"I did that with a lot of fighters. In 1987, Tommy Hearns told me he wanted to fight for the light heavyweight title, so I met with Jose Suliaman and convinced him to let Tommy fight Dennis Andries for the title even though Tommy weighed

about 154 pounds. He agreed, and the day after Tommy beat him, Andries asked me to manage and train him. I got him a few fights, got Tommy a shot at the middleweight title, then had Andries against Tony Willis for the vacant WBC light heavyweight title—his old title. Those are my managerial skills, which I take more pride in than my training skills."

Though he hasn't been doing it for nearly as long as he's been training and managing fighters, Steward is garnering praise for his work as an analyst for HBO. He replaced Roy Jones on the network's *Boxing After Dark* telecasts, and also works TVKO cards. It's been an education, even for a guy who's been in the game for nearly 50 years.

"I didn't realize at first how much work I'd have to put into it. A week or two before a show, they send me a book with all kinds of records and clips and a box full of tapes. My job is to deal with the real pertinent, detailed stuff, so I really have to study those tapes. Plus I have a lot of contacts in the game, so I can call guys in the Poconos, at Gleason's in New York, in Las Vegas, or wherever else I can get inside information on these guys."

Often times, Steward says, the hardest part is remembering his role and that he's on camera. His instincts as a fight guy, rather than a talking head, take over.

"A lot of the time I'll get engrossed in a fight from a manager's or trainer's perspective, so I don't say anything. I just sit there and watch the fight. So Jim Lampley has to pull me into the conversation."

Other times, Steward says, he'll drift off in his mind to this or that fight or to a matchup or something, and all of the sudden the camera will be on him and, because he was drifting, he won't immediately recall a fighter's name or some other detail.

"I've learned I have to put all of that stuff out of my mind," he said. "They pay me to get right to the point, and I don't want to wing it. I want to do it right."

It shows, and even if he screws up once in a while on camera, or puts one of his guys in over his head, or if, heaven forbid, some kid he manages doesn't become a world champion by his 12th pro fight, we'll forgive him. Even the best have off days once in a while. ■

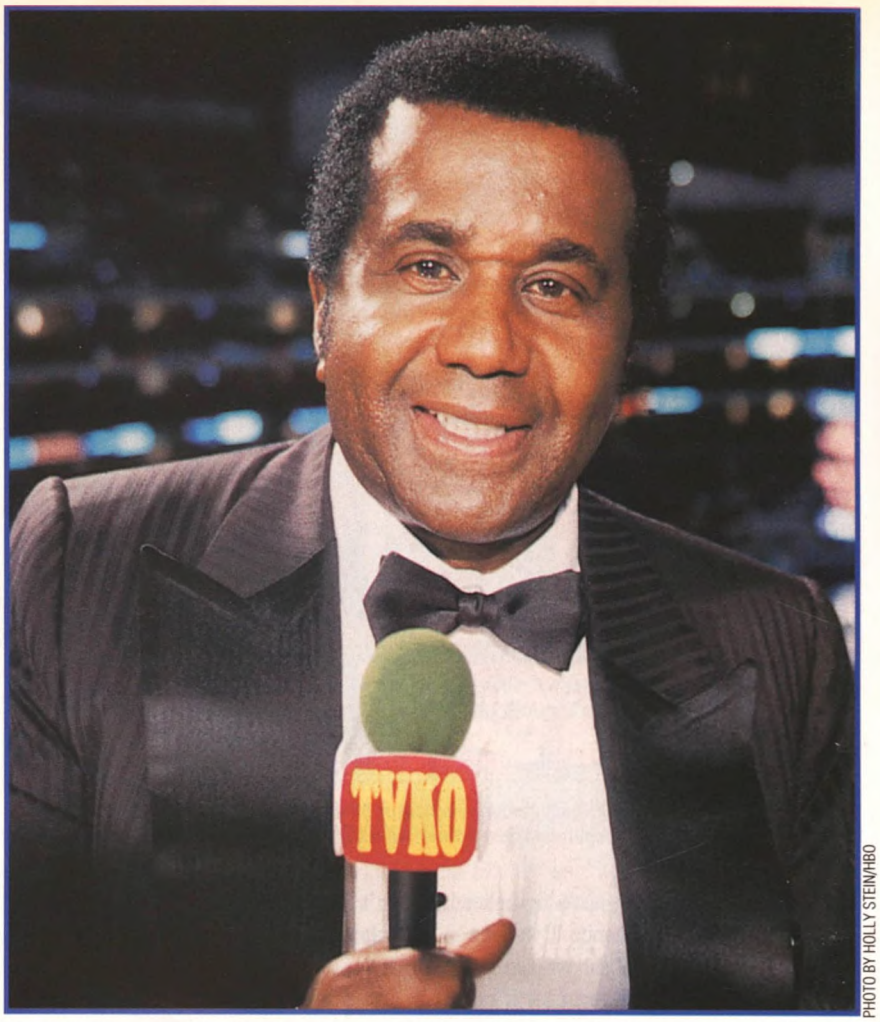


PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

Steward, who appears to be successful at whatever he does, has recently won praise for his work as a color commentator for HBO and TVKO. The trainer says he was surprised how much work it takes to do the job properly and not allow his mind to drift during the telecast.

Steward has won many honors during his career, including the Sports Image award in 1997. That's actor Danny Glover and lawyer Robert Shapiro flanking Steward at the ceremony held in San Francisco.

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"Let's See What's In Roy Jones' Heart"

CAN JOE CALZAGHE PROVIDE THE ANSWER?

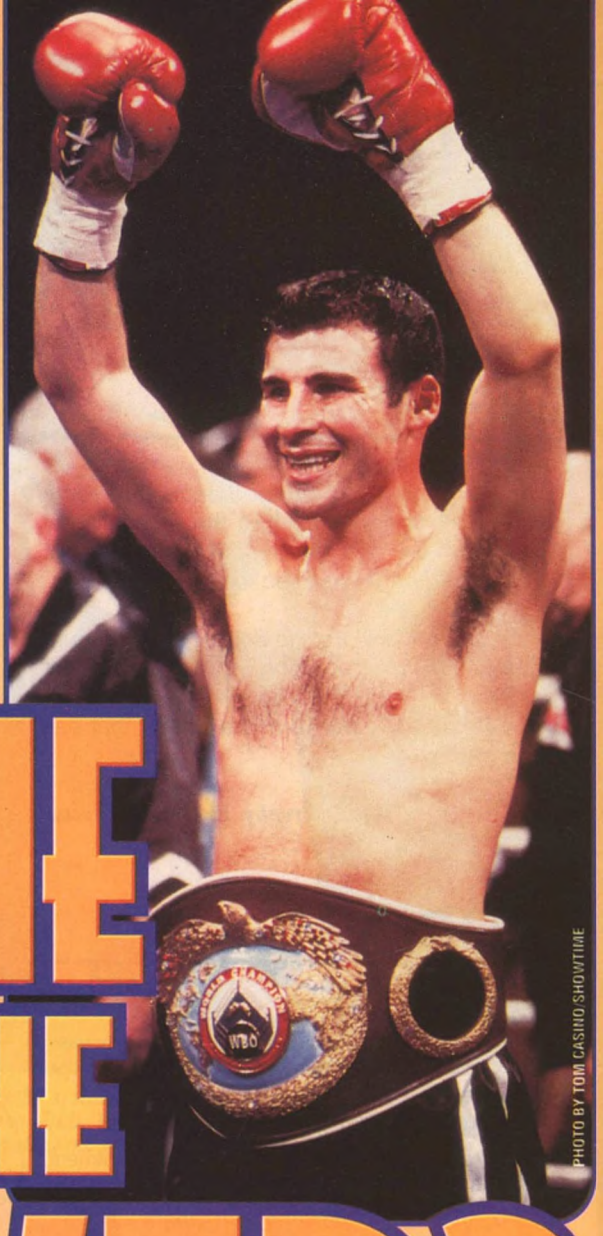


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

By Brian Doogan

The comprehensive defeats of Lennox Lewis and Naseem Hamed just two weeks apart in April were of seismic proportions in their impact on British boxing. Suddenly the two standard bearers of the game in Marquis of Queensbury country, previously dominant in their domain, were removed from their pedestals with shocking effect and haste. Hamed's demise against Mexican warrior Marco Antonio Barrera was still being absorbed when Lewis' knockout by Hasim Rahman was registering high on the Richter scale of shock heavyweight upsets.

Joe Calzaghe, the Welshman considered by many to be the best super middleweight in the business, bore an extra responsibility on his broad shoulders when he climbed into a Cardiff ring a week after Lewis' defeat to meet unbeat-

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Calzaghe floored previously undefeated Mario Veit with a left hook just 30 seconds into the first round, and proceeded to dispatch the German just over a minute later. It was a spectacular performance for the Welshman in his homeland.

en German Mario Veit. Halting the recent trend for British boxing's leading lights was as much a priority as extending his unbeaten record to 31 wins, 26 by the short route. Victory would further establish him among Britain's fistic elite and perhaps secure a reward that would be the envy of any fighter in the game: an encounter with Roy Jones, world light heavyweight champion and many people's pick as the best boxer, pound-for-pound, in the world.

Fired up for destruction, Calzaghe accomplished victory over Veit in a single round, scoring two knockdowns and forcing the stoppage in just 112 seconds, and the 29-year-old's thoughts understandably turned to Jones.

"There's no doubt whatsoever that Roy Jones is an excellent fighter and an enormous test for anybody, not just me," Calzaghe said. "But it's a test I believe I can live up to. The better the opponent, the better I perform. People have not seen the best of me."

But the right people know about him. Promoter Bob Arum, working with Jones on his July 28 defense against Mexican Julio Gonzalez at the Staples Center in Los Angeles as this issue went to press, has made it clear that Calzaghe is very much in Jones' plans, a view the fighter himself lent added credence to.

"I want to take on all those who believe they can whup me," Jones said. "Calzaghe, I hear, has been talking like that."

Not just Calzaghe. The Welshman's promoter, Frank Warren, has long championed Calzaghe's potential to prove himself a major force on the world scene. Now he is convinced his man is ready to make the giant leap.

"Joe's more skillful than Lennox Lewis and Naseem Hamed. He's a better fighter than either of them and I've always said that, even when I had Naz and he was on top of the world," Warren said. "Joe will be our fighter of the millennium. He has a great chin; he's never been on the floor as an amateur or a pro. He has tremendous fighting heart. He's a pure gladiator.

"If you want to be the best, you have to beat the best, and Joe wants to be the best. But Roy Jones has a problem with meeting the best fighters around. The last 'name' fighter he encountered was James Toney, and that was 1994 and Toney was dead at the weight. Jones avoids the big fights by demanding ridiculous sums of money. He's not shown any inclination at all to fight Dariusz Michalczewski, his only real challenge at light heavyweight. I'm actually surprised that HBO allows Jones to fight the nonentities he does. It is high time he stepped up to the plate against someone with a realistic chance of beating him, and Joe Calzaghe has the tools to do just that."

It is in his last three fights that

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Calzaghe was aggressive from the outset against the lanky Veit. The win was his third consecutive knockout, following exciting stoppages of Richie Woodhall and Omar Sheika.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Light heavyweight champ Roy Jones has all the belts a man could want, but what he doesn't have is a lot of quality names on his resume. Calzaghe would certainly be a better test for Jones than the Richard Halls and Derrick Harmons of the world.

Calzaghe has resurrected himself following a period of stagnation, caused by injury and frustration, that reached a nadir the night he labored against England's David Starie on the Mike Tyson-Julius Francis undercard in Manchester in January 2000. He had been extended further than he should have been by former WBC super middleweight titleholder Robin Reid in February 1999, eking out a split decision victory, before looking terrible against Australian Rick Thornberry that summer. Against Starie, he had the opportunity to redeem himself and gain exposure in America via Showtime, but he knew at the end of 12 tedious rounds that he had blown it. A long, hard chat with Warren and his trainer and father, Enzo, followed before he fought Omar Sheika in August 2000.

"I always had a lot of faith in my ability and in God. Everyone is tested in life, and I saw that period as my test," Calzaghe reflected. "From the age of 12, I was winning trophies in the amateurs. I've always been a winner. Even when things were going wrong, I rationalized it all and concluded that I was still winning. I was not putting on a display anywhere near my ability, but the injuries were taking a major toll and every champion has to go through a crisis.

"It all started in 1998. I had a problem with my right wrist and had it operated on. I was out for the summer, and it healed well. Everything seemed fine. But then in a sparring session shortly after I got back in the gym, I was throwing a punch that connected mid-air with my sparring partner's jab and immediately I felt a twinge that became the basis of the problem.

"For the Thornberry fight, I was unable to do one round of sparring. I was taken all 12 rounds where the fight should only have lasted three. It was all going downhill after Starie, and I really didn't know what I'd do. One thing I did was give up golf, which I'd started to play a lot of, and soon the problems in my elbows, now affected by tendinitis, improved."

His stock improved dramatically when he dominated Sheika in five rounds at Wembley Conference Center in August 2000. And it improved again when he outfought his friend and another former WBC super middleweight champion, Richie Woodhall, that December, a night that saw the best and worst of the sport put on display. In the fight before that dramatic slugfest, Paul Ingle was stretchered out of the Sheffield Arena and straight to the Royal Hallamshire Hospital, where he required surgery to remove a blood clot from his brain sustained in his IBF featherweight title defense against Mbulelo Botile.

"I was ecstatic after beating Richie, but the mood changed entirely when I was told what had happened to Paul," Calzaghe recalled. "The news, for obvious reasons, had been kept from both of us. But these things unfortunately happen in boxing, and you can't let them change your own approach."

When Lewis and Hamed experienced calamity too in Johannesburg and Las Vegas, respectively, Calzaghe refused to allow their fate to affect what he believes is his own. A single-minded determination has been there from his early days growing up in Newbridge, and his determination to prove to others what he believes himself will only reach fulfillment with a superfight against Jones or even Felix Trinidad, who is

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/ALLSPORT

The year 2000 began horribly for Calzaghe, with an incredibly boring win over David Starie in his American television debut in January, but it ended strongly, with an entertaining 10th-round kayo of Woodhall (pictured) in December.

expected to move up in weight again to super middle next year.

"I was actually meant to box on the undercard of Trinidad's bout with Oscar De La Hoya in 1999, but I had sustained the injury and was forced to watch from ringside," said Calzaghe. "I certainly wasn't viewing Trinidad as a prospective opponent at that stage, but the situation has changed entirely with his decision to keep moving up. He didn't look to me then like he had the scope to move up. He looked slim and doesn't have really big shoulders. I would just be too strong for him at super middle. I know that. I remember that De La Hoya fight, and he disappointed me. He didn't do a thing for seven, eight rounds.

"William Joppy, I felt, was a fighter who would suit Trinidad at middleweight, and I expected Trindad to look impressive, which he did. But you have to remember he was knocked down by people while fighting as a welterweight. I would punch too hard for him, and so too would Jones.

"I see Jones as the greater challenge of the two for me. He has such tremendous hand speed, but I would question his punching power. He can knock over second-rate fighters, but even most of them go the distance or into the late rounds at least against him. I don't think Roy Jones' mind is entirely in boxing. He's got himself involved in gimmicks to maintain his interest, like playing basketball the day of a fight and things like that. He couldn't do that if he was facing a proper fighter who was going to hit him and hit him hard. It's been a long time since he found himself in a genuine fight. I've been in the dark several times in the ring. But I've never gone down on the floor. I'm a champion at heart. Let's see what's in Roy Jones' heart."

This is a bold statement for a man to make and could only be made by someone with total faith in his ability. Injury-free, Calzaghe believes he is able to beat anybody, even men regarded almost as virtuosos like Trinidad and Jones. Though British boxing has been ravaged by major upset losses of late, Calzaghe is determined to show that the Brits can be on the winning end of them as well. ■

Brian Doogan is THE RING'S European correspondent.

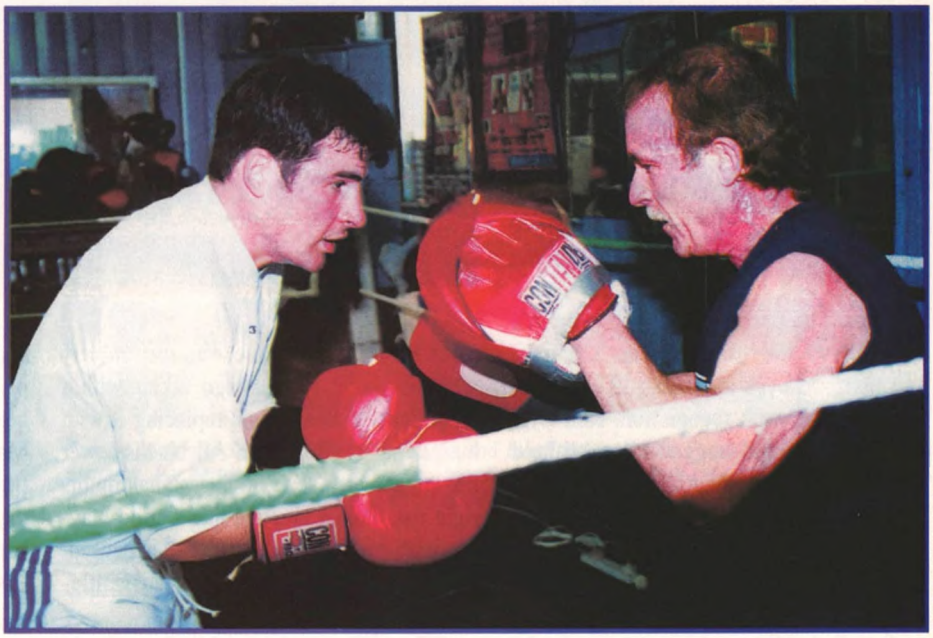
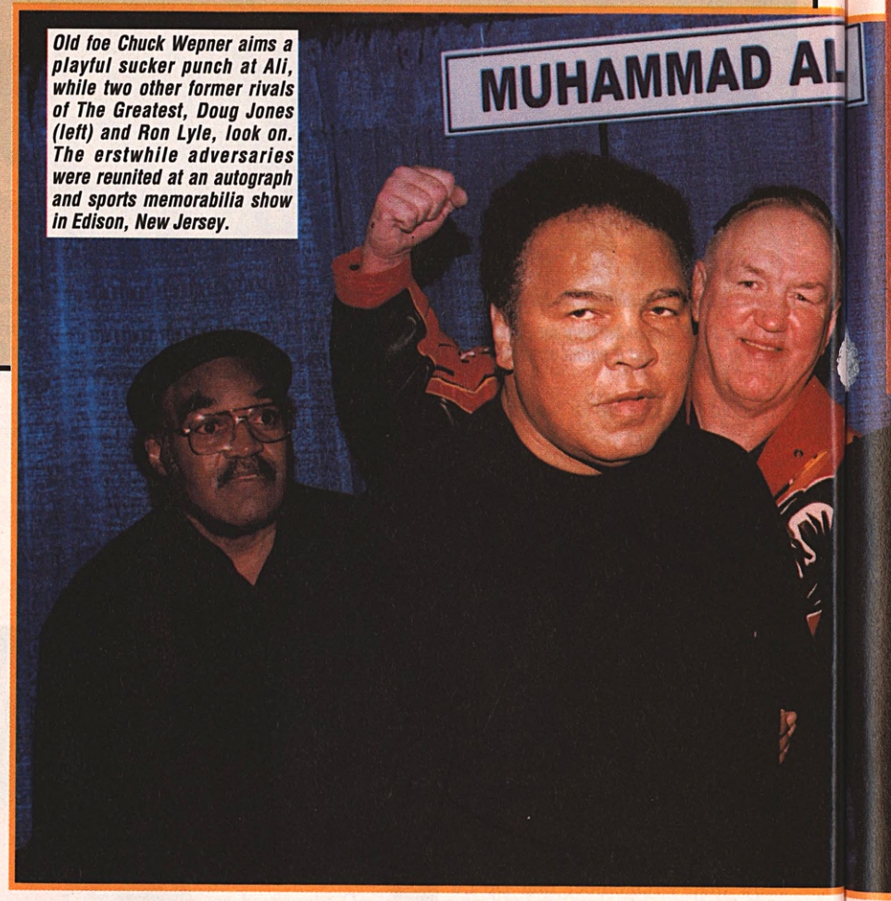


PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Enzo Calzaghe holds the pads as his son fires away. The injury-riddled super middleweight had to work extra hard in the gym to get his career back on track, and his dedication may soon be rewarded in the form of a major payday. Either Jones or Felix Trinidad would be fine.

ALI'S GIFT TO HIS OPPONENTS: THE GREATEST MEMORIES OF THEIR CAREERS



Old foe Chuck Wepner aims a playful sucker punch at Ali, while two other former rivals of The Greatest, Doug Jones (left) and Ron Lyle, look on. The erstwhile adversaries were reunited at an autograph and sports memorabilia show in Edison, New Jersey.

By Eric Bottjer

They came up from behind Muhammad Ali, literal ghosts of his fistic past. Four aging men who had, at one time, made "The Greatest" look anything but. The biggest of the foursome, Chuck Wepner, tapped Ali on the shoulder. "Hey champ," said Wepner, "say hello to some friends."

Ali, interrupted from signing autographs for a line three-wide and hundreds deep, slowly stood up with the help of a female aid and turned to Wepner. Ali smiled as best he could, the muscles in his face frozen by the Parkinson's Syndrome that wracked his body with nonstop tremors. The pair hugged, and then Ali looked down the row of Wepner's friends, and his tired eyes and mask-like expression flickered with recognition. Ron Lyle walked to Ali and hugged him. Ali held Lyle for a few moments and whispered, "Still think you can take me? Still think you can knock me out?"

"Oh no," insisted Lyle. "You're still the champ. You'll always be the champ."

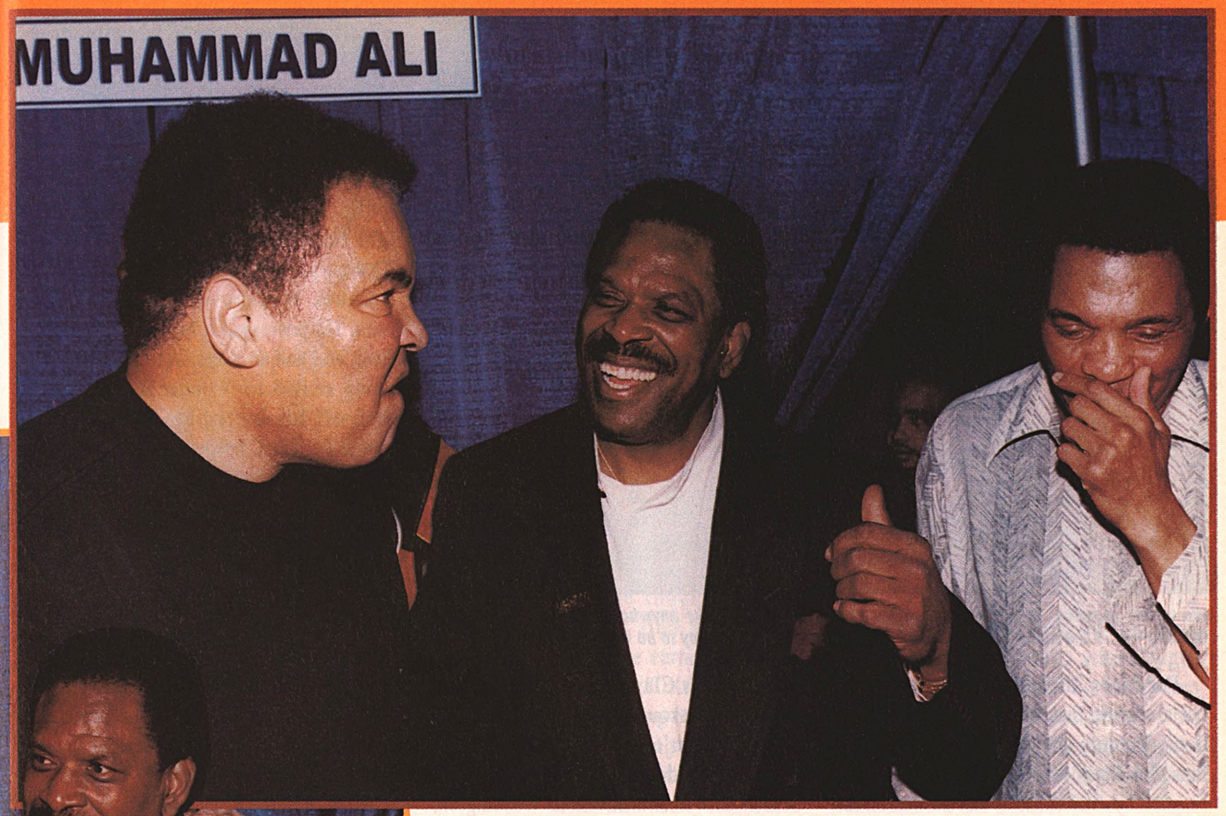
Satisfied, Ali turned his attention to the man beside Lyle, Jimmy Young. Ali took a few moments to recognize Young, whose prize fighter's physique was lost shortly after retirement 12 years ago, taking with it 20 pounds of muscle and replacing it with hunger pangs. But when Ali bit his lower lip, bugged his eyes, and began shaking his right fist, Young laughed like a child playing with his father. And then Ali paused, looking at the elderly, beret-clad gentleman next to Young.

"That's Doug, champ. It's Doug," said Wepner.

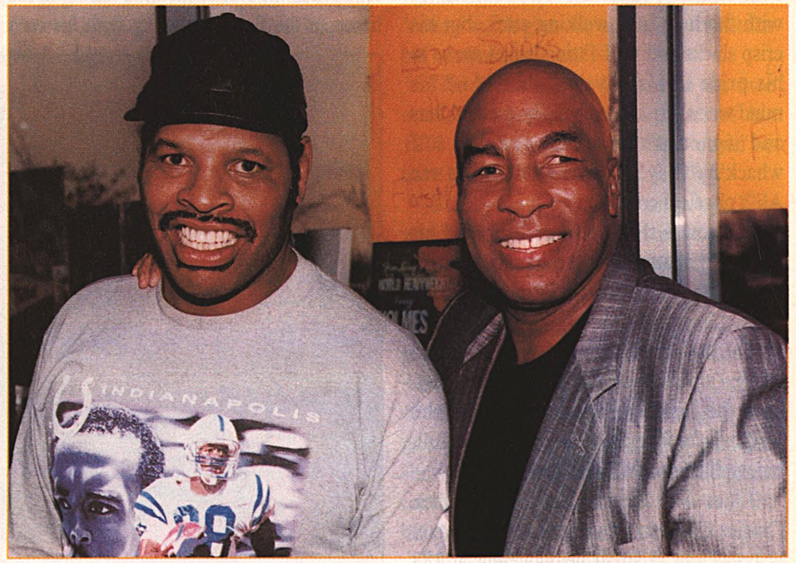
Ali did not hug Doug Jones, nor shake his hand. It was nothing personal. He simply did not recognize the man who almost beat him on March 13, 1963, at a sold-out Madison Square Garden. It was the first time the pair had seen each other since their fight. Nobody realized that fact at the time, so nobody explained to Ali that "Doug" was in fact Doug Jones.

The group posed for photos, and the crowd who had gathered at $300 a head to get Ali's autograph did not complain about the impromptu delay. They realized what these moments meant to the former adversaries.

This reunion was not planned, but it was still Ali who had brought the group together, along with Joe Frazier, Ken Norton, Leon Spinks, and Earnie Shavers. All were there to sign autographs for thousands of fans who crowded the New Jersey Convention Center in Edison—a huge soulless building in an industrial park off exit 10 of the Jersey Turnpike. Ali was earning $250,000 for this weekend to scrawl his signature as many times as he could for three hours each day. Young, Lyle, Jones, and Wepner were brought in by TCB Boxing, a Brooklyn-based boxing memorabilia company, and sat together at a table greeting fans and signing photos. The foursome earned a total of $3,000. None of them complained about the discrepancy. Without Ali there, there would have been no boxing fans in attendance and none of the other ex-fighters would have been invited.



Renewing rivalries: "Still think you can take me," Ali asks Lyle, as Jimmy Young stifles a laugh. Despite the punches they've exchanged, most of the old enemies were delighted to see one another again.



Former heavyweight champion Leon Spinks and longtime contender Earnie Shavers look awfully chummy, but perhaps that's because they never met in the ring. Both Lyle and Young agreed that nobody hit them harder than Shavers, whom some consider the hardest-hitting heavyweight of all-time.

We wanna rematch: Jones, Wepner, Lyle, and Young didn't make anywhere near as much money fighting—or at the autograph show—as Ali, but they were all happy to be together again.

For Jones, the outing was a rare one, but a venture that answered a lot of questions. Rumors abounded among old-time fans that Jones was homeless, that he was plagued by Alzheimer's, that he was on his deathbed. Far from it. Just a week past his 64th birthday, Jones moved about slowly with the help of a walking stick, but his crisp slacks and well-fitting jacket spoke to his pride in his physical state. And his mind was sharp. Jones happily greeted fans and signed photos of his younger self whacking Clay. He was saddened to see Ali's physical condition.

"I know I shake," Jones said, and his hands do shake when he has to perform tasks with them, "but he's in bad shape. It's sad."

Shirley Jones, Doug's wife, was also startled at Ali's physical state. She remembers the last time she saw him, at the weigh-in before the Garden fight. "Tall, big, and handsome," she recalled.

Jones was 26 when he met Ali (then Cassius Clay) and was rated number two at heavyweight (a small heavyweight at 188 pounds). Even at that time, Jones had an inkling that Ali was changing the sport.

"He was bringing the fight game up," said Jones. "And by doing that, he was bringing all of the other boxers up. So I didn't mind all the talking he did."

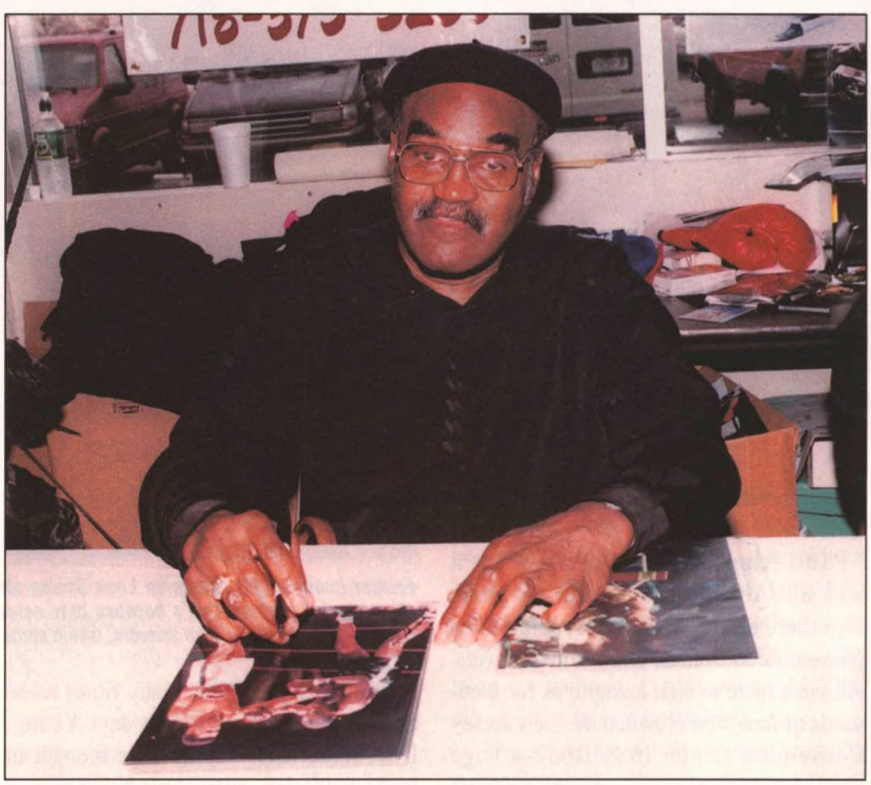
If Jones does have a regret, it's that fans know him from the Clay fight alone. He points out that three months prior to tangling with Clay, he had stopped Bob Foster in eight rounds.

Jones hasn't been to a pro fight in years, but he does attend the New York Golden Gloves and travels to Washington, D.C., once a year for an Air Force reunion. He spends the rest of his time toiling in his home in the Bronx, fiddling with his coin collection, while Shirley, his wife of 44 years, works in Manhattan at the Veterans Administration as a secretary. The pair met as 13-year-olds growing up on 145th Street in Harlem. Doug's boxing never bothered Shirley.

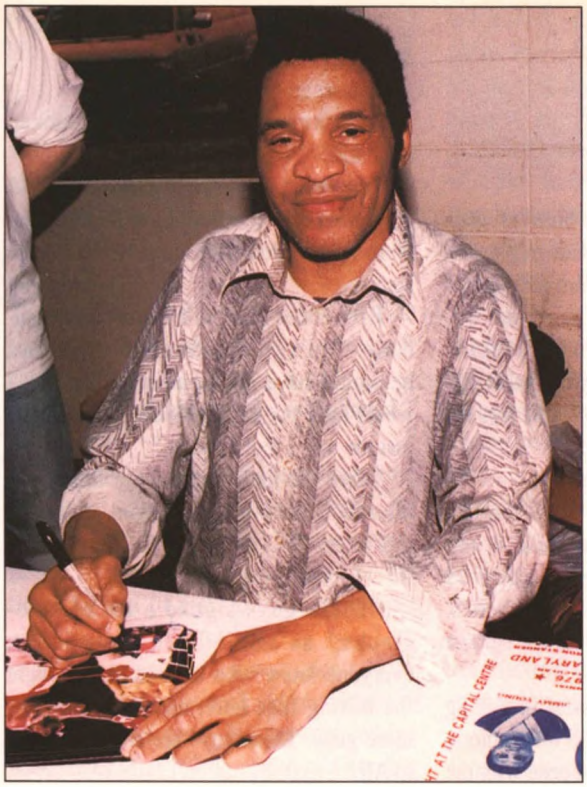
"He was a serious boxer. He ate the right food, he trained well," she said. "That's what he lived to do."

Chuck Wepner was the anti-Doug Jones. He possessed a big body and little talent, and had an aversion to training. But timing smiled on Wepner in 1975. Ali, fresh off his incredible victory over George Foreman, needed an easy mark for his first title defense. Promoter Don King choose Wepner, somehow rated number eight. "Give the white boy a break," was King's slogan for the fight. When ticket sales in Cleveland lagged, King told Wepner to call Ali a "nigger" at a press conference to create hype. Wepner refused. King pleaded with the Bayonne fighter, telling him he could call on the promoter anytime for a favor. So Wepner did it, and Ali, seeing Chuck's insincerity, laughed.

After retirement, when Wepner fell on hard times, he remembered the incident and made a phone call. To Ali. Later that day, Wepner had $5,000.



Ali didn't recognize Jones, probably because they hadn't met face-to-face since the night of March 13, 1963, at Madison Square Garden, when Jones came close to handing the then-Cassius Clay his first professional defeat. Jones is now 64, and remains in good mental and physical health.



Despite the fact that he was a slick defensive specialist, all the tough fights have taken a toll on Young, who lost a controversial decision to Ali in 1976, and beat both Lyle and George Foreman during his distinguished career.

"I'll send him photos from time to time and write, 'Champ, I need a few autographs,'" said Wepner. "He always sends the photos back signed with a note asking when he's going to get paid for all these autographs. One time I wrote him back, 'Never.'"

The Ali fight turned Wepner into a workingman's hero. Sylvester Stallone watched the fight on closed-circuit TV, was astounded at Wepner's courageous stand that lasted just 19 seconds shy of the final bell, and spent two sleepless nights putting the screenplay of *Rocky* on paper. The real-life Rocky lived the wild life, which descended into drug use and eventually led to a prison term. Released in 1992, Wepner got his old job back as a liquor salesman, married current wife Linda, and found he had lost none of his working-class hero status. He is besieged whenever he attends fights in his home state and is a favorite at boxing get-togethers, where his storytelling is lethally funny. At the autograph convention, Wepner seemed to know half the fans by name. He is still the most popular guy in the neighborhood.

Ron Lyle ate dinner that night at a local restaurant and didn't have to wait for a table, despite the dozens of others ahead of him hoping for a seat. When the maitre de saw Lyle enter, he immediately cleared an area and escorted Lyle and his party to their seats. Wepner had called ahead.

"Everything they say about that guy, it's true and more," Lyle said of Wepner, who kissed Lyle on the cheek when the pair departed the convention center earlier that day. Asked how long he had known Wepner, Lyle replied, "Just met him today for the first time."

Lyle fought Ali two months after the Wepner fight. He earned a career-high $150,000 for the fight, taking home $50,000 after paying his management, trainers, and taxes. Lyle also nearly took Ali's title. Few remember that he was beating Ali, out-jabbing the champion and leading on the scorecards heading into the 11th. Lyle had sparred with Ali in '72 and saw immediately that Ali's jab was his best weapon.

"It was hard, harder than it looked," remembered Lyle. "It felt like a straight right."

So Lyle took away the champ's jab, following trainer Chickie Ferrera's sage advice, and fought a tactical battle. But Ali dug deep as he always did, hurt Lyle with a right, cornered him, flurried, and the referee stopped the fight, nearly starting one with an incensed Ferrera.

A year later, Lyle earned $75,000 and nearly beat another legend, flooring George Foreman twice before falling exhausted in the fifth round. In '77, Lyle won his biggest fight. Faced with a murder charge, the onetime Colorado con who did 9½ years for second-degree murder in the '60s won his freedom with dramatic testimony. He retired from boxing in 1980 after losing to Gerry Cooney in one round, made an improbable comeback in 1995 at age 54 in hopes of fighting Foreman, won six straight, and retired when told Foreman-Lyle II wasn't a possibility.

Lyle now works at the Tropicana in Las Vegas. He looks younger than his 59 years and his physique is still powerful. Yet the face that once featured a menacing goatee and stare is now relaxed, and his calm manner speaks of serenity and sincerity. Boxing did not beat Ron Lyle, but it did not leave him either. He has dreams of becoming a trainer, and he points out that he schooled Michael Grant at Richard Steele's gym when Grant learned as an amateur.

"The way he fights inside, I taught him that," said Lyle proudly.

Lyle lost twice to Jimmy Young. Lyle disputes the decisions, but admits it was nearly impossible to hit Young cleanly. Yet boxing has knocked the Philadelphian to his knees. He carries himself like a child, albeit a happy one. He doesn't slur his words, doesn't need help walking. Still, the 52-year-old Young, who fought Shavers, Norton, Lyle, and Foreman, does depend heavily on the assistance of his daughters. A son, Jason, 21, also helps out and is an amateur boxer with five fights. When asked if he worked, Young said he hangs out a Champs' Gym where Jason trains and helps out with the novices. Young won't give Ali any of the credit for his current condition.

"He didn't hit me cleanly in the face once," remembered the slickster of his 1976 title fight with Ali. "How could he have beat me if he didn't hit me?"

Young is not spouting sour grapes. Few who saw their 15-rounder made Ali the winner, except for three Maryland judges. Young earned $75,000 for the fight, splitting it with manager Blinky Palermo. After paying his taxes and expenses, Young took the remaining $13,000 and bought a car. At the autograph session, Young signed phony copies of the Ali fight contract that showed the champ earned $1.8-million, not including 30 round-trip tickets and 30 hotel rooms, including three suites.

"It wasn't the money that was important to me at the time," said Young. "I knew I should have gotten more money. But it was the chance. The title. Ali."

Nine months later, Young earned his big purse ($250,000) and beat George Foreman.

"Oh my God, did he hit me," said Young.

(Continued on page 52)

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Ali's Opponents

(Continued from page 51)

As Young spoke, a spry Shavers wandered by on his way to sign autographs at a separate table. Young saw him and immediately flinched, raising his arms, not trying to be funny, yet drawing laughs. "Oooh man, that man is always with me. He hit so hard, the hardest. I still feel his punches today," said Young.

Lyle nodded in agreement.

"Shavers hit me so hard that it felt like needles were jabbing the back of my head," said Lyle, who also sampled Foreman jabs and Gerry Cooney hooks, but unhesitantly called Shavers the hardest puncher he met.

Not all, however, is blissful in boxing heaven. Competitive fires still burn among the retired. Frazier would not pose with the group because of Ali's presence. "C'mon, lighten up," Wepner told Smokin' Joe.

"Naw, forget it. He called me that name," replied Frazier, who never wanted to be the Gorilla in Manila.

"He had names for everyone," reasoned Wepner.

"He didn't give you one," retorted Frazier, his memory keen.

"Look at me," laughed Wepner. "I didn't need one."

Frazier still shook his head no.

Lyle hugged Norton, but it lacked affection.

"He never would fight me," said Lyle, convinced that he would have knocked out Norton and used the victory to earn elite status.

Even Jones spat out a name contemptuously: "If Floyd Patterson had fought me, he would have been one sorry behind. I would have put the fire to his cakes. That's just the way I feel about it."

When the men parted ways in the late afternoon, they all exchanged addresses and hugs. TCB Boxing's Joe Santomarco was stunned at the turnout.

"These guys signed a lot of autographs," he said. "Even Doug Jones, everyone knew who he was. Ali brought the boxing fans here, and they all knew these guys. These guys are still connected to Ali."

Jones, Lyle, Young, and Wepner all acknowledged that. And to the man, they all expressed the hope that Ali realized the effect he was still having on their lives.

"He is a great man," said Young of Ali. "He gave us all an opportunity. I'm glad I was here today to thank him." ■

Eric Bottjer is a matchmaker for Cedric Kushner Promotions.

Wepner tried to get Joe Frazier to pose with Ali, along with all the other old rivals, but Smokin' Joe, who remains bitter despite all claims to the contrary, stubbornly refused.

New Face

(Continued from page 20)

were guys bleeding and stuff; guys getting hit, blood everywhere from guys bleeding from the nose," Ravelo recalled, laughing. "Remember, I was 12 and about 65 pounds."

Six months later, Ravelo lost his first fight. Truth is, he started his amateur career 0-5.

"In the beginning, I just sucked," Ravelo said.

Nonetheless, an interesting foundation developed. Ravelo kept coming back. He lost and kept coming back. He was embarrassed by the losses, embarrassed by the times he had to pick himself up off the canvas. He even quit boxing for three years as a teenager, and was once told by his father that he would never amount to anything in the sport. But he kept coming back. Even after falling victim to a number of poor decisions as an amateur, Ravelo still found his way back to the gym.

It's that persistence that guided Ravelo to the 2000 Olympics as a representative of the Dominican Republic, and has been a major reason why the 6'2" super middleweight has begun his pro career 5-0 (3).

"It was hard work for me to get into boxing here in the United States," said the 24-year-old Ravelo, who moved to Newark, New Jersey, with his mother, Cecilia, when he was eight years old.

Anytime Ravelo gets into the ring now it's serious business. He has a serious team around him in manager Gary Gittleson, trainer Oscar Suarez, and assistant trainer Jose Rosario. He wears a serious look of determination every time he fights, displaying an excellent jab, punching power in both hands, and an ability to put constant pressure on opponents.

The right-handed Ravelo was a slick boxer throughout his amateur career. As a pro, however, he's abandoned being cute in favor of a more aggressive approach, breaking down opponents with bodyshots. But he's still a long way away from being a finished product.

"We're working with Jerson in making his opponents miss and countering them," said Suarez, who also trains Naseem Hamed. "If you have a guy who is going to put a little pressure on you, you have to use lateral movement. That's something we're trying to teach Jerson. We're working on new punching angles and punching while he moves laterally.

"I have no problem comparing Jerson with Roy Jones. The only thing different is that Jerson has better technique than Roy. The other thing is that Roy Jones doesn't like to take the kind of chances Jerson takes. That's why I say Jerson will definitely become a world champion, God willing. Jerson has that desire to get there, to become the first super middleweight champion of the world from the Dominican Republic."

Ravelo is still searching for consistency. In his pro debut, he put away Miguel Gutierrez at Madison Square Garden in the first round, yet fumbled at times against Enroy Toney in his second bout. He won via four-round decision, but didn't look as impressive.

"I liked Jerson in his first fight; he looked real promising," said Ron Scott Stevens, a matchmaker for Cedric Kushner Promotions. "But when I saw him the next time against Toney, who's an awkward fighter, it pointed out to me that Ravelo needed more experience. In the long run, that will make him a better fighter. I like what I've seen of him so far, though. He's very natural in there."

Suarez is stressing that Ravelo adapt more to a professional style, but that will come with time. The trainer's big concern is that Ravelo has so much talent, he wants to become a world champion tomorrow.

"We can't rush things," Suarez warns him. "We always tell him to take his time. He'll be a world champion some day.

"Jerson's very energetic and he has to learn to put all of that energy into his balance. Every time I give him something different, he tries it. He says that if he doesn't feel any pain, it doesn't work. Jerson is constantly working. When you have all of those things, the management team and the work ethic, you know you're going to make it."

Looking back at Ravelo's history, it's amazing he's even reached this plateau. He's endured his share of knocks and pings, from the time he first put on gloves. In 1992, Ravelo quit boxing. He felt his career was stagnant, winning some fights, losing some fights. So from the ages of 15 to 18, Ravelo hung out with friends and filled his athletic appetite by playing pick-up basketball.

In fact, basketball seemed the direction Ravelo was heading. The only reminder he had of boxing was Rosario, who would occasionally see Ravelo with his boys out on the street, and tell the young man that the door to the gym was always open if he wanted to return. Two things kept Ravelo from committing to basketball: a brief chat with his father when Ravelo was 17 years old, and skinny legs.

"My dad told me I'd never make it in boxing, and why would I even think about going back," Ravelo said. "I felt bad, with that coming from him. But I was used to it. I had an uncle tell me once, when I started and was losing all of the time, to give it up. As I got older, I figured my father and uncle just said that to motivate me."

Ravelo's deep hidden secret as to why he didn't pursue basketball is because he thought—and still thinks—his legs are too skinny.

"Basketball shorts were too short to wear, but in boxing, I get away with skinny legs because the boots are high and I can wear my shorts around my knees," said Ravelo, laughing. "When I used to play basketball out in the streets, I used to be the only one wearing jeans because of my legs. Still to this day, I'll wear long pants. I don't like my legs."

Ravelo's grand goal is to be the Felix Trinidad of the Dominican Republic. He drew a significant following to his pro debut at Madison Square Garden, selling 100 tickets alone to family and friends.

"There are a lot of fighters from the Dominican Republic who were good fighters, but never made it; I don't want to hear that," Ravelo said. "I want to reach the Dominican people. It's important to me. I haven't been to the Dominican Republic in a while, but I hear from people there that my fights are in the paper and they show them on TV."

These days, Ravelo's originally reluctant family is solidly behind him. His mother, Cecilia, attends his fights, but keeps her head down, too afraid something bad may happen to her only son to watch. His father could not be more proud of his son's achievements.

"My father is always bragging about me to his friends," Ravelo said. "It's just that I never hear it that much. But I know." ■

SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Chris Byrd W 12 Maurice Harris
Frans Botha W 10 David Bostice
Terrence Lewis KO 9 Robert Davis
Brian Nielsen KO 6 Benjamin Baker
Obed Sullivan W 12 Sherman Williams
Jameel McCline W 10 Al Cole
Robert Daniels KO 5 Samson Cohen
Corey Sanders W 8 Garing Lane
Mark Potter W 8 Michael Murray
Kali Meehan KO 8 Emelio Leti
Phil Jackson W 6 Nick Nurse
Quinn Navarre W 6 Freddie Guzman
Alain Martin KO 1 Badara M'Baye
Ricky Womack KO 4 Gesses Mesgana
Kelvin Davis KO 2 Bobby Scoggins
Dominick Guinn W 6 Ron Smith
Malik Scott KO 2 Robert Anderson
Paolo Vidoz W 4 Eduardo Carranza
Audley Harrison KO 1 Mike Middleton

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Marcelo Dominguez W 10 Jose Gomes
Wayne Braithwaite KO 2 Matthew Charleston
Lou Del Valle W 8 Dennis McKinney
Ramon Garbey KO 1 Ezra Sellers
Rudiger May W 10 Firat Arslan
O'Neil Bell KO 10 Jose Luis Rivera
Dario Matteoni KO 8 Perfecto Rodriguez
Ole Klemetsen KO 5 Patrick Swann
Jean-Marc Mormeck KO 3 Antonio Caldas
Arturo Rivera KO 3 David Lopez
Courtney Butler D 8 Bo James
Carlos Cruzat Tech. Win 6 Muslin Biarslanov

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Reggie Johnson W 12 Will Taylor
Montell Griffin Tech. Win 10 Jesus Ruiz
Bruno Girard KO 4 Marco Duarte
David Telesco KO 1 Tom Cameron
Guillermo Jones KO 1 Victor Maciel
Tony Oakey KO 10 Hastings Rasani
Daniel Judah KO 4 Donnie Giron
Randy Griffin KO 4 Dan Sheehan

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Antwun Echols KO 3 Charles Brewer
Robin Reid KO 3 Roman Babaev
Julio Cesar Green D 8 Charles Whittaker
Tocker Pudwill W 10 Anthony Bonsante
Fredrik Alvarez KO 1 Carl Cockerham
J.J. Corn KO 1 Rick Stockton
Naotaka Hozumi KO 1 Sikat Pasaribu
Jeff Lacy KO 1 Tony Pope

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Felix Trinidad KO 5 William Joppy
(Wins WBA Title)
Antonio Perugino KO 3 Said Yazidu

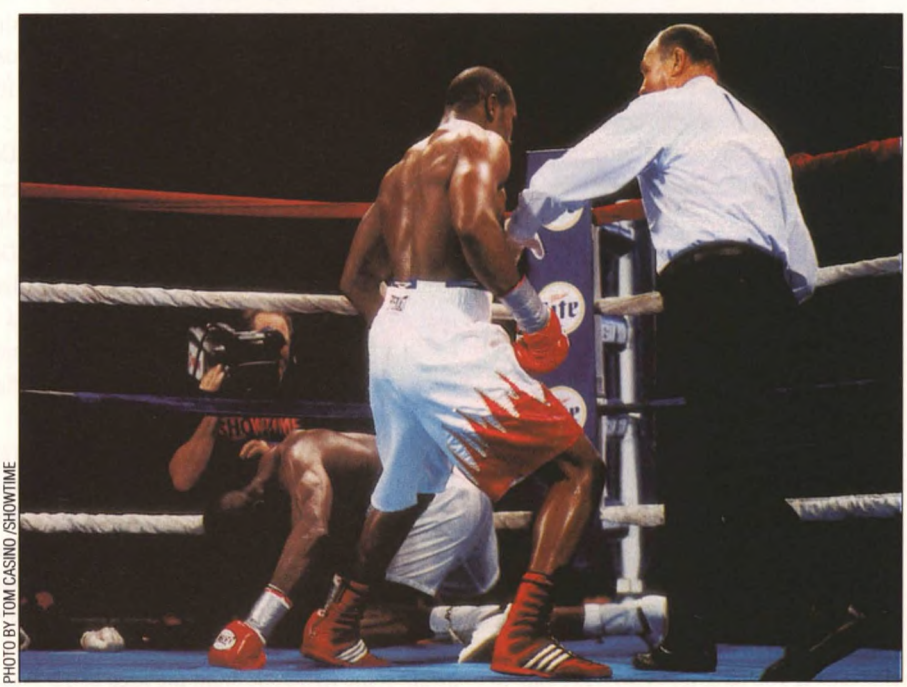

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO /SHOWTIME

Olympian Jeff Lacy crushes Tony Pope

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Junior welter prospect Juan Diaz wings a hook at Carlos Navarez

Erland Betare KO 5 Ricardo Simara
Tito Mendoza KO 2 Paulo Sanchez
Raul Marquez KO 4 Tony Menefee
Kirino Garcia KO 1 Jacob Pambele
Mpush Makambi KO 1 Anthony van Niekerk
Michel Trabant KO 2 Petr Pokorny
Kuvanych Toygonbayev KO 6 Nick Martinez
Francisco Galvez W 10 Jairo Siris
Tokunbo Olajide KO 3 Leo Edwards
Jermain Taylor W 4 Antonio Baker

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Steve Roberts KO 9 William Gare
Michele Piccirillo No-Contest 4 Elio Ortiz
Mamadou Thiam KO 9 Mikael Rask
Robert Frazier KO 1 Tim Bryan
Santiago Samaniego KO 7 Rashid Matumla
Jose Rivera W 10 Patrick Byrd
Juan Carlos Barreto W 10 Alfred Ankamah
Richard Williams W 10 Hussain Osman
Scott Dixon KO 5 Ruben Varon
Jimmy Lange KO 5 James Johnson

WELTERWEIGHTS

Vernon Forrest W 12 Raul Frank
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Thomas Damgaard KO 3 Rodney Jones
Antonio Diaz KO 5 Jorge Luis Lopez
Terronn Millett W 10 Luis Perez
Jan Bergman KO 7 Guillermo Mosquera
Bolillo Gonzalez W 10 Juan Carlos Sanchez
Felix Flores KO 4 Gerald Gray
Chantel Stanciel KO 2 Alex Lubo
Jose Luis Cruz W 12 Jorge Vaca
Curtis Barker W 10 Patrick Thorns
Larry Mosley W 6 Jaime Morales
Mohamad Abdulaev KO 5 Daniel Felix
Christy Martin W 10 Kathy Collins

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Micky Ward KO 1 Steve Quinonez
Eamonn Magee KO 7 Harrison Methula
Vivian Harris KO 1 Hector Arroyo
Antonio Pitalua KO 8 Saul Duran
Carlos Gerena KO 7 Arturo Cruz
Terrance Cauthen W 10 Franco Ogentho
Mario Ramos W 10 David Sample
Ahmed Santos KO 8 Kenito Drake
Ricky Quiles W 8 GIlberto Quiroz
Rogelio Castaneda KO 1 Frankie Santos
Ebo Elder KO 6 Tyrone Ivory
Jauquin Gallardo W 6 Jose Luis Montes
Fred Cadena W 4 Andre Baker
Juan Diaz KO 1 Carlos Navarez
Oscar Diaz KO 1 Richard Best
Sumya Anani W 10 Liz Mueller

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Paul Spadafora W 12 Joel Perez
(Retains IBF Title)
Stevie Johnston Tech. Win 9 James Crayton
Stevie Johnston W 8 Pedro Garcia
Victoriano Sosa W 12 Francisco Lorenzo
Stefano Zoff KO 10 Djamel Lifa
Julien Lorcy KO 3 Kimou Kouassi
Lawrence Ngobeni D 12 Tirso Albia
Ernesto Zepeda KO 4
Julio Cesar Sanchez-Leon
Sandro Casamonica KO 5 Ali Effeni
Nate Campbell W 6 Angel Rios
Miguel Cotto W 4 Martin Ramirez
Francisco Bojado KO 1 Ernesto Fuentes
Cristian Bejarano KO 1 Chris Burford

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Floyd Mayweather W 12 Carlos Hernandez
(Retains WBC Title)
Jesus Chavez W 12 Juan Arias
Lamont Pearson KO 9 Carlos Navarro
Phillip Ndou KO 2 Domingo Damigella
Alex Moon W 12 Karim Nashar
Javier Jauregui W 10 Ivan Valle
Pedro Miranda KO 8 Pablo Osuna
Orlando Villaflor KO 3 Luis Lizarraga
Shamir Reyes D 4 James Baker
Steve Trumble KO 4 Reymundo Beltran

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Derrick Gainer KO 2 Cedric Mingo
(Non-Title Bout)
Guty Espadas KO 6 Jose Pablo Estrella
Daniel Seda KO 9 Nana Konadu
Fernando Velardez KO 8 Jesus Salud
Manuel Calvo W 12 Steve Robinson
Jose Quintana Tech. Win 12 Daniel Jimenez
John Michael Johnson W 10 David Murillo
Rocky Juarez KO 4 Eddie Uturov

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Israel Vazquez KO 2 Ever Beleno
Angel Chacon W 12 Cuauhtemoc Gomez
Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym W 10 Duncan Karanja
Junichi Watanabe KO 3 Nobuhisa Doi

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Veerapol Sahaprom KO 3 Ricardo Barajas
(Retains WBC Title)
Jorge Lacierva W 8 Jose Sarabia-Segura
Rafael Marquez KO 2 Miguel Ochoa
Heriberto Ruiz W 10 Ricardo Vargas
Brahim Asloum KO 3 Victor Martinez

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Masamori Tokuyama KO 5 In Joo Cho
(Retains WBC Title)
Martin Castillo KO 3 Evangelio Perez
Erick Lopez KO 6 Raul Juarez
Carlos Madrigal KO 4 Miguel Angel Granados
Alex Sanchez KO 1 Jose Valarde
Jose Navarro KO 3 Carlos Zambrano

FLYWEIGHTS

Alejandro Montiel W 12 Ruben Sanchez-Leon
Fernando Montiel KO 1
Juan Domingo Cordoba
Gilberto Keb-Baas W 10 Francisco Garcia
Everardo Morales KO 11 Oscar Arciniega
Gerson Guerrero KO 1 Josue Camacho
Brian Viloria W 4 Ben Jun Escobia

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Fahlan Sakkreerin KO 5 Melchor Garcia

STRAWWEIGHTS

Yutaka Niida D 10 Daisuke Iida
Juan Herrera D 12 John Molina
Nobuyuki Enomoto W 10 Masanori Suga

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PRESENTS

The RING

FIGHTER of the MONTH

It's one thing to easily blast out guys like Hugo Pineda, Mahenge Zulu, and Ray Lovato in just a few rounds. Felix Trinidad wasn't named Fighter of the Month for any of those wins, nor should he have been. Trinidad has always excelled against guys he's been expected to handle easily. But when he faces potentially dangerous opposition, Trinidad usually struggles before prevailing, even touching the canvas most of the time. Not so against William Joppy, whom "Tito" effortlessly bombed out in five mesmerizingly destructive rounds to earn Fighter of the Month honors for the fourth time in his career.

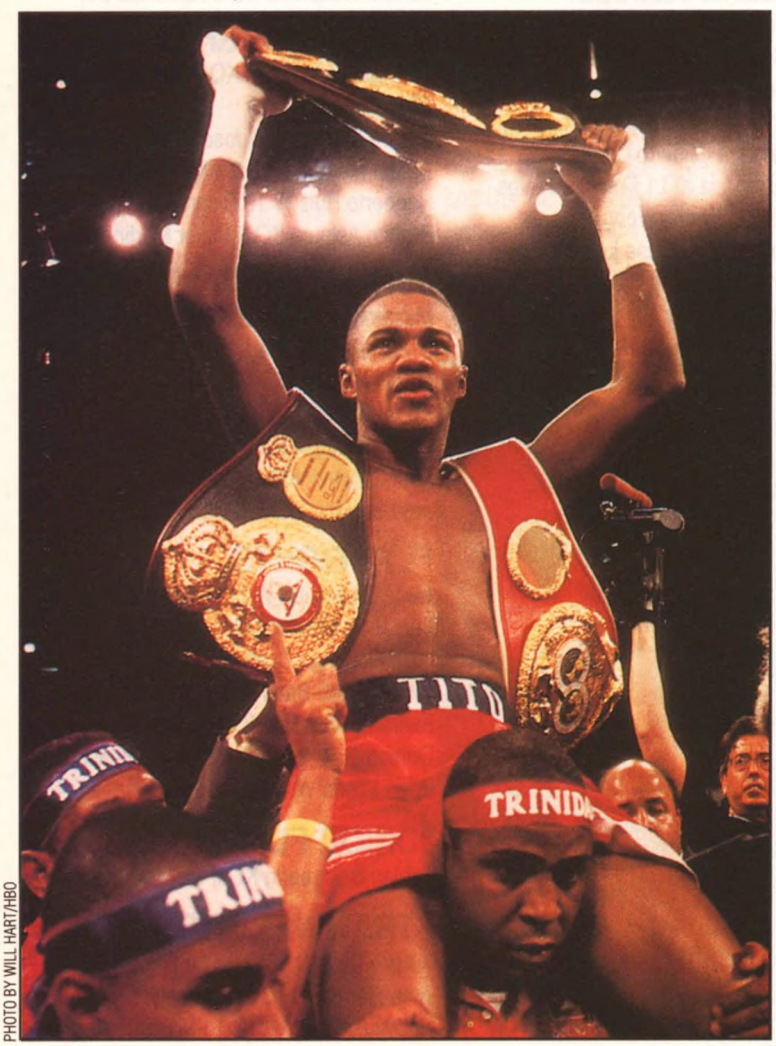

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Before fighting Trinidad, Joppy had only been knocked down once as a pro and had only lost once, via highly disputed decision. But there was no disputing this one, as the two-time WBA middleweight champ was floored three times before being mercifully rescued at the 2:25 mark of the fifth. Joppy obviously wasn't the toughest opponent Trinidad ever faced, but he was no pushover either. Or at least he wasn't expected to be.

Bernard Hopkins had better be ready. Because the way Trinidad's been looking lately, a fifth Fighter of the Month award may have his name on it come September.

Felix Trinidad

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Fernando Vargas KO 6 Wilfredo Rivera

El Paso, Texas: Vargas, fighting before a raucous Cinco de Mayo throng at the Don Haskins Center, survived a stunning second-round knockdown to pound tough veteran Rivera into a sixth-round surrender in the first leg of his comeback journey.

With a crowd of 9,212 holding up homemade signs supporting the former IBF junior middleweight champion from Oxnard, California, the celebratory mood turned serious quickly when, in the first minute of the second round, Rivera floored Vargas with a hard right hand to the chin. Vargas, 21-1 (19), scrambled to his feet and made it through the round on instinct, but for an instant it looked like Vargas' first fight after the Felix Trinidad battle would be a disaster.

"I thought, *S___, I better get up*," Vargas said after the shocking experience.

He did get up, and proceeded to administer a thorough beating to Rivera, 32-5-1 (20). Just like in the Trinidad fight last December 2, Vargas proved that he has considerable guts to go along with his skill. But after getting dropped for the sixth time in two fights, many left the Haskins Center wondering if Vargas still has a chin.

El Paso took to Vargas, 156, immediately—rekindling memories of Oscar De La Hoya's visit in 1998—and a collective gasp could be heard when "Ferocious Fernando" hit the mat. Vargas teetered forward on the canvas before rising, obviously hurt. Had Rivera, 156, Puerto Rico, attacked, the veteran may have finished the job. But he opted to wait for another perfect opportunity, and it never came.

Except for that brief moment of fright, Vargas was in control almost the whole fight, and Rivera's face gradually become a swollen mask of blood and bruises. By the sixth round, Rivera could offer little. A thumping Vargas bodyshot put the Puerto Rican on the canvas, and his corner decided their man had had enough. A towel flew into the ring just 39 seconds into the round.

Vargas was leading 48-46 on all three scorecards at the time of the stoppage. Team Vargas didn't seem concerned about the knockdown.

"Fernando's conditioning was a little bit better than the Trinidad fight," Vargas' trainer, Roger Bloodworth, said.

Rivera indicated it could be the end of the line for him. After unsuccessful bids against the best fighters of his day—Pernell Whitaker, De La Hoya, and Shane Mosley—Rivera's manager Bob Mittleman said the end was near.

"Wilfredo never put enough pressure on him," Mittleman said. "He never finished him off when he had the chance. I'm not going to let him get hurt. This could be his final fight."

After the fight, there was talk of a Vargas-De La Hoya showdown next summer. First, Vargas is likely to fight for the vacant WBA 154-pound title in the fall.

The referee was Laurence Cole (USA).

Promoter: Main Events

(5-5-01)

Matthew Aguilar

PHOTO BY RUBEN R. RAMIREZ

Vargas hits the deck hard in round two

Juan Lazcano KO 11 John-John Molina

El Paso, Texas: In a performance that will surely get him noticed by the boxing community, native El Pasoan Lazcano struggled early before emerging victorious in a Cinco de Mayo war with Molina. He hammered the gallant veteran to the canvas with an extended flurry in the 11th round to retain the NABF lightweight title in front of 9,212 screaming fans on the Vargas-Rivera card at the Don Haskins Center.

With the victory, Lazcano, Sacramento, California, by way of El Paso, positioned himself well for a shot at WBC 135-pound king Jose Luis Castillo—the fighter he was originally supposed to challenge before settling for the aging, but still dangerous, Molina.

"The difference in the fight was my heart," Lazcano said.

Both fighters displayed heart. Molina, perhaps too much.

The end came at 1:06 of the 11th round. Lazcano, 27-2-1 (20), had hurt Molina, 52-7 (33), in the 10th, and resumed his attack in the next round. After landing counter lefts all fight long, Lazcano finally hit paydirt with a solid shot that cracked Molina on the chin and made his legs do an involuntary dance. Lazcano pursued his wounded opponent, emptying his guns as Molina stood defenseless against the ropes.

Referee Jerry McKenzie (USA) let the fight go too long, opting not to step in as Molina took shot after shot against the ropes. Molina's corner hurled a towel in the ring, but McKenzie, with his back turned, didn't see it, and the slaughter continued. Finally, McKenzie stopped it as Molina slumped to the canvas. Lazcano did the same, overcome with joy.

For Molina, a former IBF junior lightweight champion, it was a cruel ending for a fighter who gave everything he had. The 35-year-old Puerto Rican looked every bit his age at the end.

"I didn't have anything left," said Molina, who fought the best his era had to offer, including Oscar De La Hoya and Shane Mosley. "I survived the 10th round on heart alone." Molina was taken to

Providence Memorial Hospital for a CAT scan, but was released that evening.

From the outset, the two combatants were locked in a spirited, crowd-pleasing brawl. Molina appeared to have the early edge, setting a torrid pace that seemed to surprise the 26-year-old Lazcano. Lazcano looked tight early, and Molina took advantage.

By round two, Lazcano, 134, had begun to establish his jab. As Molina, 134, bulled inside, Lazcano would counter with lefts. The fight fell into a consistent pattern, with the cagey veteran doing as much as he could on the inside, and the quicker Lazcano countering with combinations. A counter left at the end of round four hurt Molina. It was a sample of things to come.

It was still an amazing performance by Molina, a fighter a decade past his prime. Going into round six, he was clearly ahead, and in that round, McKenzie took a point from Lazcano for hitting on the break. A few seconds later, the hometowner emerged from a clinch with a nasty cut between his eyes. He would brawl with blood streaming down his forehead the rest of the way.

By the late rounds, however, Molina's attack had slowed considerably. He had spent himself by the ninth round, and Lazcano issued a nasty beating in the 10th. But Molina remained game to the end, suavely leaning away from Lazcano's hasty haymakers late in the round even though he was badly hurt. The end, however, was inevitable.

"I knew if I weathered the storm early, I'd win the war," Lazcano said.

Promoter: Main Events

(5-5-01)

Matthew Aguilar

Vernon Forrest W 12 Raul Frank

New York, New York: It took almost 10 years, but Forrest, Augusta, Georgia, is finally a world champion. The former Olympian scored a dominating 12-round unanimous decision over Frank, Brooklyn, New York, on the undercard of Trinidad-Joppy at Madison Square Garden.

Forrest, 32-0 (25) with 1 no-contest, won the vacant IBF welterweight title by pounding Frank, 23-4 (12) with 1 no-contest, with a steady jab and crisp combinations. The overmatched Frank, 147, put up little resistance, other than leaning into Forrest, 145½, with his head. The bout was a rematch of a no-contest outcome in August 2000, stopped due to an accidental headbutt that opened a gash over Frank's right eye.

Forrest, 30, made this victory over Frank, 32, look much easier than it actually was.

"On a scale of one to 10 of grading myself, I give myself a C-plus," Forrest said afterward, apparently unaware that letters and numbers aren't interchangeable. "I began getting cramps in my left leg during the fight and hurt my right hand in the third round. I couldn't get any power in my right hand. But I stayed with it. And I was glad to get the win. I'm the new IBF welterweight champion of the world."

After winning the first two rounds just by being more active than Frank, Forrest opened up his offense in the third, blistering the retreating Frank with a head-snapping overhand right. Each round seemed to take the same course, with Forrest stalking and Frank not doing much of anything. In the second half of the fight, Frank was

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Forrest jabs his way to the IBF welter title

wobbled several times, but Forrest never came close to taking out his steel-chinned opponent.

"Vernon was sharp, but he's going to be a lot sharper," said Al Mitchell, who co-trained Forrest for this fight, along with Ronnie Shields. "Ronnie and I wanted him to work behind his jab more and be a little more aggressive, and we thought he did all of those things. He gave us a great fight. There is no question he did what we wanted him to do and that's take control of the fight."

Mitchell was so pleased with his fighter's performance, he quickly placed Forrest up with another champion in the welterweight division: WBC titlist Shane Mosley. The victory over Frank could set the stage for a rematch of when Forrest beat Mosley in the final qualifier for the 1992 U.S. Olympic team.

"I don't think anyone can beat Vernon," Mitchell said. "If he can put it all together, he can beat anyone. I think it's a great fight between Shane Mosley and Vernon. If Vernon fights his fight, he'll win."

Judges Frank Adams (USA) and Steve Weisfeld (USA) each scored the bout 118-110 for Forrest, while George Colon (USA) had it 120-108. THE RING saw it 120-110. The referee was Ken Zimmer (USA).

Television: TVKO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(5-12-01)

Joe Santoliquito

Chris Byrd W 12 Maurice Harris

New York, New York: Byrd grew one step closer to his ultimate dream of fighting for the heavyweight title by controlling Harris to win a one-sided decision on the undercard of the Felix Trinidad-William Joppy show at Madison Square Garden. The fight was dubbed an eliminator for the number-two ranking in the IBF, and Byrd's victory sets up a clash for the IBF's mandatory-challenger position with number-one rated David Tua.

Harris, 18-11-2 (9), was supposed to be a formidable foe, but, at least from the middle rounds on, the only real obstacle Byrd seemed to be competing against was the music played by Trinidad's fans throughout the fight. At times, the background tones drowned out any crowd reaction to what was going on in the ring, and was arguably more entertaining.

However, Byrd, 33-2 (19), persevered, deploying his unusual style

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Byrd takes the fight to Harris

of ducking, bobbing, and weaving to consistently frustrate and score on Harris.

"I watched some tape of Harris, and I thought he could match me in skills," said Byrd. "He's a spoiler and that's why no one wants to fight him. Harris probably would have beaten a lot of fighters if he was given the opportunity. My whole strategy was to box him, make him miss, and try to get into his head with movement."

And, surprisingly, use a verbal assault, which was rare from the usually sportsmanlike Byrd.

"Yes, I did a little talking to him," admitted Byrd sheepishly. "I know that's not characteristic of me, but when he threw a good right hand and hit me, I told him to throw it again."

After a slow start, Byrd, 217¼, Flint, Michigan, picked up the pace in the third round, building a rhythm. He accurately picked apart the 25-year-old Harris with nimble lefts and rights. Harris, 224¼, Newark, New Jersey, appeared to wilt by the middle rounds, while Byrd, 31, looked stronger and stronger. The smallish heavyweight is not noted for his punching power, but Byrd landed a left hook to the temple that dropped Harris in the sixth. By the 10th round, the crowd of 18,235 ran out of patience and booed the fighters, but Byrd didn't let that affect him.

Byrd was awarded a unanimous decision, with judges Don O'Neill (USA) and Tony Paolillo (USA) each scoring 117-110, while Don Ackerman (USA) had an even more lopsided score for Byrd at 118-109. THE RING had it 118-110. Referee Wayne Kelly (USA) got a nice workout, breaking up many clinches.

Television: TVKO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(5-12-01)

Joe Santoliquito

Daniel Seda KO 9 Nana Konadu

New York, New York: In a minor gem hidden at the bottom of the Trinidad-Joppy undercard at Madison Square Garden, Seda became a player in the featherweight division by stopping two-division former champion Konadu at the 2:30 mark of the ninth round of a scheduled 12-rounder.

Seda, Puerto Rico, dropped Konadu with a counter right in the first, but the man from Ghana continued to force the fight, applying pressure and firing heavy left hooks whenever he got within range. Another straight right floored Konadu in the third, and it looked like Seda was in for an easy outing, but the 37-year-old Konadu wasn't about to go peacefully.

Although numerous counters penetrated his porous defense, Konadu, 126, walked through the punches to belabor Seda, 125, with hard hooks to the body and head, sweeping the fourth, fifth, and sixth rounds on THE RING's scorecard. The sixth was an especially good one for the African, and when he decked Seda with a left hook to the head, it seemed like he was on the verge of overpowering his 24-year-old opponent.

Konadu suffered a cut on his right eyelid in the seventh, which slowed his advance a bit. But he was back on the attack in the exciting eighth, when both men landed frequently with punishing shots. The fight still seemed to be up for grabs in the ninth when Seda uncorked another right to the chin, sending Konadu down for the third time.

Konadu was on his feet by the count of seven, but referee Mike Ortega (USA) called a premature halt without even bothering to complete the count. Konadu protested, but it was to no avail, and his record fell to 41-5-1 (32). While the talented, hard-hitting Seda, 17-0 (15), was probably going to prevail anyway, considering how well he'd fought back after the first two knockdowns, the courageous Konadu deserved a chance to see if he could do it again.

Promoter: Don King Productions

(5-12-01)

Nigel Collins

Andrew Lewis W 12 Larry Marks

New York, New York: If WBA welterweight champ Lewis, Brooklyn, New York, via Guyana, thinks he can outlast Shane Mosley the way he did Marks, New Castle, Delaware, the flashy Lewis will need more than just his catchy "Six Heads" nickname; in fact, if he shows the same defensive flaws as he did against Marks, Lewis will need six chins to have a chance against Sugar Shane.

With Mosley, the WBC welterweight champ, seated ringside at the Hammerstein Ballroom, Lewis, 146½, struggled mightily to escape the first round of his initial title defense, before coasting the rest of the way to a 12-round unanimous decision over the gutsy Marks, 144¼.

After wobbling Lewis with a big right hand in the opening round, Marks, 21-4 (12), had Six Heads reeling. The challenger failed to follow up, however, either out of respect for Lewis' power, or simply because he did not realize how badly he had Lewis hurt. Regardless,

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Eventual loser Konadu rocks Seda with a straight left

that brief sequence was enough for Mosley to quickly detect some flaws in Lewis, 21-0-1 (19).

"Lewis keeps his chin too far up," Mosley noticed. "If he looks like he did tonight, he probably wouldn't go the distance with me. I think he messed up a little bit in the early rounds. I see a lot of openings. Overhand rights, left hooks. But Marks was a tough fighter, maybe tougher than Lewis realized."

After the first-round scare, the southpaw Lewis, 30, settled down. He rendered the 29-year-old Marks, a former sparring partner of his, harmless the remainder of the fight with a steady jab and plenty of combinations, though he wasn't impressing anybody while piling up the points. Marks had to resort to mocking gestures toward Lewis, like sticking out his tongue and wiggling his hips. Marks landed only 74 punches, according to CompuBox. Lewis landed more jabs, 88, than Marks landed punches.

Though Lewis' flat outing did not gain many fans among the press, he still came away impressed with himself.

"I thought it was a good performance," Lewis said defiantly. "I wasn't thinking about Shane Mosley at all. That first round, I just got caught a little off-balance. I wasn't hurt. I thought it was a good fight."

Judges Luis Rivera (USA) and Tom Kaczmarek (USA) each scored the fight 119-109 for Lewis, and judge Oscar Perez (Dominican Republic) had Lewis winning 120-108. THE RING scored it 119-108 for Lewis. The referee was Steve Smoger (USA).

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(4-28-01)
Joe Santoliquito

Julio Diaz KO 9 Justo Sencion

New York, New York: Bob Arum does not often travel across the country just to see fights involving one of his prospects, but for Diaz' first significant test, "Big Bob" made an exception. Arum thinks he has another Oscar De La Hoya in the talented Diaz, the younger brother of junior welterweight contender Antonio Diaz. The baby-faced, 21-year-old Diaz did not disappoint his promoter, scoring a ninth-round knockout of southpaw Sencion. Arum was beaming so brightly afterward, his smile could have lit HBO's glitzy *KO Nation* show at the Hammerstein Ballroom.

Despite a slow start, Diaz, 22-0 (16), changed the course of the fight in the sixth. His consistent body work started to take a toll, and "Sensational" Sencion, 16-1 (9), hit the canvas in the sixth as the result of a digging left to the ribs. In the seventh, Diaz dished out more body punishment, this time connecting with a right that dropped Sencion, 22, for the second time.

"My plan all along, something I was sleeping with all night, was to come out and wait and see what he was going to do," Diaz said of his deliberate start. "I wanted to see what Sencion had, then attack. He's a dangerous fighter who throws punches from nowhere. I felt I could go to the body against him. I didn't want to take any chances."

However, from the fifth round on, Diaz, 134¼, Coachella, California, became bolder. He noticed Sencion, 134½, New York, New York, was not moving as fluidly as he had in the first four rounds, and Diaz felt the sway of the fight going in his favor. By the ninth, Diaz sensed he had Sencion ready to go and concluded the bout with a crushing left hook to the body, dropping Sencion a third time.

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Sahaprom uncorks a right against Barajas

Referee Mike Ortega (USA) counted Sencion out at 1:10 of the ninth.

"We've gone 10 rounds before with better fighters than Sencion, so we had hoped he would come forward, because eventually, Julio would get him," said Lee Espinoza, Diaz' longtime trainer. "Julio is so smart and so patient, you forget he is still a baby in this sport. The frightening thing about Julio is that he's very good now, and he's only going to get better. Wait another year when he fills out more physically and becomes a man. He can beat world champions right now."

Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
(4-28-01)
Joe Santoliquito

Veerapol Sahaprom KO 3 Ricardo Barajas

Paris, France: After weathering the early storm of mandatory challenger Barajas, 117, Mexico, the thunder came from Sahaprom, 117, Thailand, who knocked his man out with a perfectly executed right hand at the end of the third round at the Palais des Sports to retain the WBC bantamweight championship for the sixth time.

The two fighters appeared on the same bill in March, also in Paris, winning their respective bouts inside the distance. A close, tough battle of attrition was anticipated, but once Sahaprom found his stride he was deadly, and no matter how brave Barajas was he was not going to deny the Thai.

The challenger started well, unleashing a stream of left hooks at Sahaprom, 31-1 (23), who bided his time before claiming control in the final half of the opening round. The Thai's jab worked well, and he drew blood from Barajas' nose to take the round on two of the judges' cards.

A clash of heads in the second prompted an ominous reaction from Barajas, 22-2-1 (21), who turned away in a vain attempt to convince French referee Daniel Talon that he was the victim of a deliberate effort by the 32-year-old champion to inflict harm illegally. Barajas, 22, responded with wild abandon when the action resumed, and Sahaprom had no difficulty in evading most of the potential damage. A solid right before the end of the second clearly hurt Barajas, whose legs almost gave way before the bell intervened not a moment too soon.

But Sahaprom would not be denied. He took several left hooks

and rights hands that caused some damage underneath his left eye in the third, but exploded with a terrific right hand before the end of the round that sent the challenger to the canvas. Barajas tried to get up, but collapsed again onto his back, and the referee finished his count at 3:00 of the third round.

Promoter: AB Stars Productions

(5-14-01)

Brian Doogan

Roberto Leyva W 12 Daniel Reyes

Queens, New York: When Leyva, a virtual unknown from Ensenada, Mexico, was 15, his father, who was a fisherman, was lost at sea and never found. Leyva did not have to go searching too far to find Reyes in winning the vacant IBF minimumweight title in an action-packed fight at the Amazura Ballroom in Jamaica, Queens.

The 21-year-old southpaw Leyva, 104½, dominated the second half of the fight, connecting with an array of straight lefts to the head and right hooks to the body and head of Reyes, 104¼, Colombia. Leyva, 18-0 (16), turned what had been a difficult fight to score through the first six rounds into a clear-cut unanimous decision.

"I've always been a slow starter," Leyva explained through an interpreter. "I thought the last four rounds I had control of the fight. I tried to put him away, but as long as I kept pressure on him, I knew I had him."

Reyes, 25-1 (21), controlled the pace early. Coming forward, Reyes, 29, displayed a better work rate, landing wide rights to Leyva's body and head. Leyva showed a solid defense, holding his hands high and deflecting a number of Reyes' punches, but it was Reyes who was by far the more aggressive fighter. Leyva finally opened up in the third, countering with rights and lefts to Reyes' head.

The momentum began to lean toward Leyva in the seventh. After Reyes produced a solid sixth, the Colombian seemed to take a round off. Leyva took advantage, starting the seventh by exploding a right on Reyes' chin. Leyva stalked Reyes until the end of the round, and carried that momentum into the crucial eighth.

Leyva began the eighth effectively, hitting Reyes with a solid right to the head. He stayed on top of the retreating Reyes, until he nailed him with a looping overhand left on the top of the head that produced the only knockdown of the fight. By the ninth, Leyva was in complete control. Confident that Reyes could not hurt him, Leyva kept coming forward, while the Colombian gradually wilted.

Judges Melvina Lathan (USA) and Bob Gilson (USA) both scored the fight 115-112 for Leyva, and Glenn Feldman (USA) had it slightly closer at 114-113. THE RING saw Leyva a 117-112 winner. The referee was Wayne Kelly (USA).

Television: Univision

Promoter: Top Rank

(4-29-01)

Joe Santoliquito

Paul Spadafora W 12 Joel Perez

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Spadafora didn't have a lot to prove in his fifth IBF lightweight title defense. Perez had never won when down to lightweight poundage, and was coming off a big win over trialhorse Lee Cargle in a four-rounder! These facts meant nothing to "The Pittsburgh Kid's" adoring hometown fans, who provided a near sellout (in spite of heavy competition from a Pittsburgh Penguins playoff game going on at the same time) in an open-sided tent with trains roaring by close enough to rattle the drinks in press row. They cheered Spadafora's every move, and provided a level of electricity that surpassed what actually took place in a tense but non-explosive contest.

The early rounds were a taut chess match, with Perez, 135, landing enough lead rights to raise questions about the favorite's vaunted defense. But Spadafora, 33-0 (14), later excused it as part of his game plan.

"If I didn't want to get hit, I swear, I wouldn't get hit," he explained. "But I wanted to get hit tonight so I could get mine off." The challenger's lack of threatening power doubtless contributed to trainer Jesse Reid's strategy. But more worrisome was the clacking of heads that resulted from Spadafora's southpaw stance, and threatened an anticlimax.

Ironically, the portside positioning may have contributed to the only significant fireworks of the fight. In the fourth, the 29-year-old Perez, Houston, Texas, was stepping up the pressure to offset Spadafora's advantage in skills when he got bushwhacked and sent down by a surprise straight left. The punch was clean and opportune, but may have been aided by the entanglement of the lead feet. The challenger wasn't badly hurt, and protested to the referee, Pittsburgh's Ernie Sharif. Spadafora, 135, tried to press the advantage, but Perez quickly fought his way back.

As it wore on, the contest itself became anticlimactic. The challenger fell more and more off course, while the local hero compensated for the lack of drama by posturing to the fans. Perez gave it a good try, but was simply outclassed.

"I started off well," Perez, 31-5-2 (18), said. "He rose back. He's a lot slicker and smarter than I expected."

Lee McCowan (USA) and Paul Silverman (USA) scored 119-108, while Steve Weisfeld (USA) had it 120-107.

For the 25-year-old Spadafora, these hometown romps may be coming to an end. Insiders are calling for a step up in competition, which in turn may demand purses that only a casino can accommodate. Angel Manfredy (in attendance and engaging in a spirited harangue with young locals), Stevie Johnston, and Max Kellerman have been mentioned.

Television: ESPN2

Promoters: Michael Acri Boxing Promotions, Three Rivers Boxing Promotions

(5-8-01)

J.R. Jowett

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Perez appears on top here, but Spadafora would win easily

Masamori Tokuyama KO 5 In Joo Cho

Seoul, South Korea: Tokuyama, a North Korean residing in Japan, visited South Korea for the first time and kept the WBC super flyweight title with an impressive knockout of South Korean ex-champ Cho at the Sheraton Walkerhill Hotel. The end came 45 seconds into the fifth round when Tokuyama, who had dethroned Cho on an upset decision in Osaka, Japan, last August, completely flattened him with a perfectly timed left-right combination. The loser stayed on the canvas for several minutes before he dejectedly left the ring.

With a North Korean and a South Korean fighting in a quest for the throne on the Korean peninsula, it was an emotional scene. A unification song was sung by the crowd, and rather than carrying their respective national flags, the two corners carried a unification flag together, a symbol of the two nations' earnest wish to unify their divided mother land.

Tokuyama, 114¾, making his second defense, looked very tense and stiff in the first two rounds and failed to use his trademark jabs effectively. Cho, 115, kept moving to avert the champ's pressure and occasionally attempted to score countering right crosses, though he missed the target most of the time.

After two close rounds, Tokuyama, 24-2-1 (6), began to fight with his usual smoothness, and landed several one-two combinations to the elusive Cho in the third and fourth rounds. In the fifth, Tokuyama landed a fast, solid left-right combo on the button, and Cho, 18-2 (7), was left completely unconscious. The 32-year-old ex-champ didn't stir during the 10-count of referee Tony Perez (USA).

Tokuyama was not regarded as a puncher but rather as a light-hitting speedster, but his lethal shot showed his improvement in power and confidence since his unexpected coronation last year. Tokuyama will be obliged to face perennial top contender Gerry Penalosa, a hard-hitting lefty ex-champ, in his next defense, an excellent test for the 26-year-old titlist.

Promoter: Kusung Lee's Poongsan Promotions
(5-20-01)
Joe Koizumi

Antwun Echols KO 3 Charles Brewer

Uncasville, Connecticut: Poise and ring generalship weren't the first order of the day, but no one would cite the Antwun Echols-Charles Brewer showdown at the Mohegan Sun for want of explosive action and dramatic twists of plot. About the only shortcoming was the brevity, which left fans booing.

The scheduled super middleweight 12-rounder got off to a fast start as a brisk and savvy point-counterpoint in the first round. Then everything broke wide open in the second. Echols, 165, Davenport, Iowa, seemed to lose concentration, and Brewer, 167, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, seized the opportunity and drilled him with a beauty of a straight right that zinged him to the floor. Echols seemed to be protesting something to referee Mike Ortega (USA) while still on the canvas, then continued protesting after he'd gotten up. He later said he didn't remember what he was protesting, and Brewer immediately tried to help him forget. "The Hatchet" went after him without mercy, doubling the left hook over and under to send him to the canvas again. Finally, Echols was caught on the ropes and his head rotated by a booming left hook that floored him a third time with just a few seconds left in the round.

It seemed a miracle that Echols, 25-4-1 (24), got out of the second round, and nobody expected that it would be the other guy who wouldn't survive the third. Echols, 28, bolted out of his corner as if in desperation, and he soon nailed the surprised Brewer, 31, with a clean right hand, then came back twice more as the stricken fighter reeled toward the ropes. In a frenzy to end it, Echols began to pour it on, only to find himself on the floor. But it wasn't his opponent who sent him down this time. It was the referee! Many fans thought "Kid Dynomite" had been sent down by a counter, but in fact Ortega, anxious to interrupt Echols' flurry in order to administer a count, had shoved him. "He was stronger than me," Echols observed later. On the supposition that the ropes were preventing Brewer from going down, the former IBF champ was given a count, while Echols dusted himself off and headed to a neutral corner.

At this point, with both men hurt, the contest had become a matter of who would get there first. Going for broke, Echols drove Brewer, 36-8 (26), across the ring, stood him up on the ropes with an uppercut, and took several free shots on goal before Ortega waved it over at the 1:21 mark.

Then the action started! Revelers and protesters poured into the ring, Brewer's trainer Augie Scimeca went postal, and the referee's action became the target of a barrage of what-ifs.

"When Echols was hurt, he got up all three times," Ortega explained. "He was defending himself and fighting back. When Brewer went to the ropes, he was hurt. He lost his mouthpiece. He was being held up by the ropes. It looked to me that he wasn't defending himself."

Echols advised that his opponent should have taken a knee. Showtime's Jay Larkin commented: "Our take is that it was a premature stoppage." Out of the confusion, one thing was clear: The action was as good as the ending was controversial.

Television: Showtime
Promoter: Main Events
(5-19-01)
J.R. Jowett ■

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

The end is near as Echols rocks Brewer with a left

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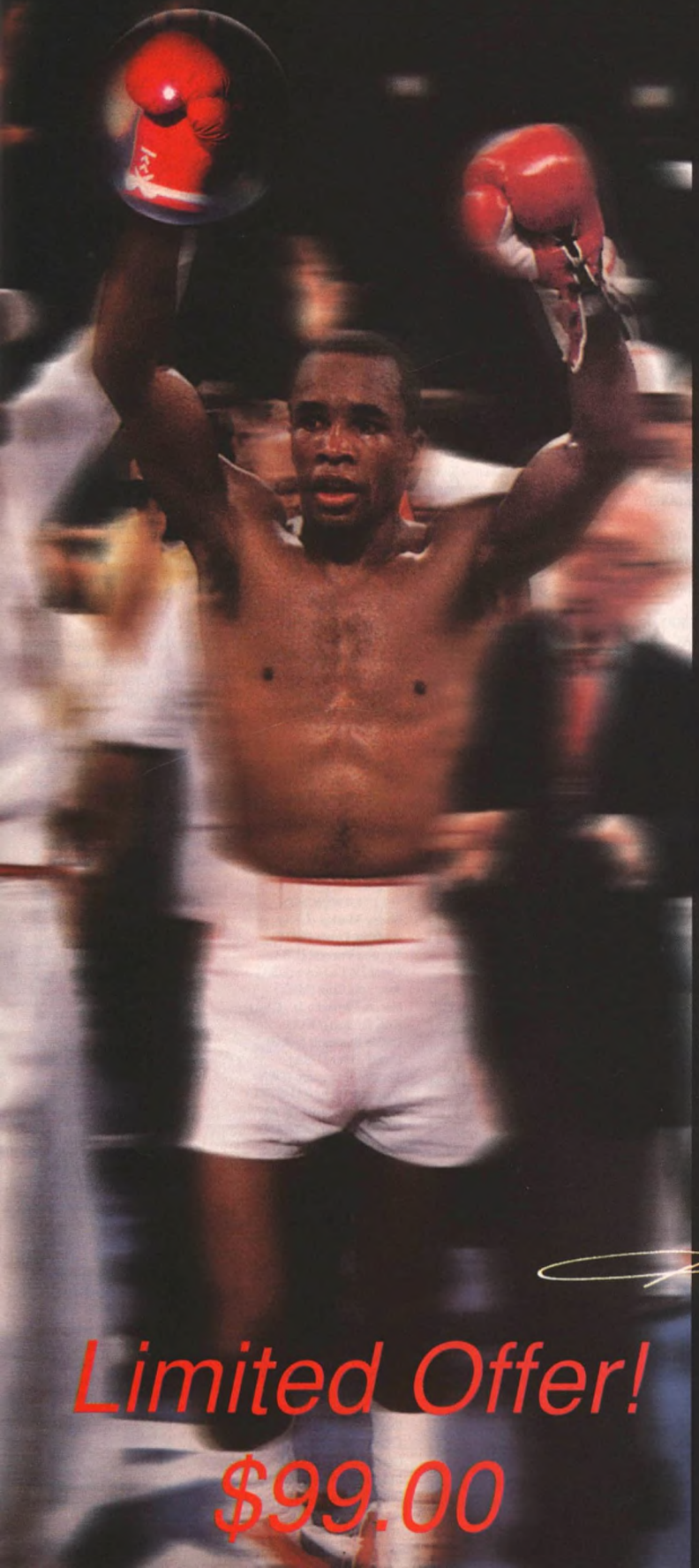

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WORLDWIDE RATINGS

The ratings of the three major governing bodies recognized by The Ring are supplied by the organizations themselves. They are updated on these pages as soon as they are made available to us. In this issue, the WBA ratings were compiled as of May 2001, the WBC as of April 2001, and the IBF as of May 2001.

HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Hasim Rahman (USA)	C	–	C
John Ruiz (USA)	–	C	–
Mike Tyson (USA)	1	7	8
Lennox Lewis (GB)	2	6	5
Vitaly Klitschko (UKR)	3	5	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	4	–	6
Larry Donald (USA)	5	4	4
Lance Whitaker (USA)	6	8	9
David Tua (NZ)	7	10	1
Fres Oquendo (USA)	8	–	10
Henry Akinwande (GB)	9	9	–
Vaughn Bean (USA)	10	12	–
Vacant	–	1	–
Kirk Johnson (CAN)	–	2	–
Evander Holyfield (USA)	–	3	11
Chris Byrd (USA)	–	–	2
Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)	–	–	3
Danell Nicholson (USA)	23	–	7

CRUISERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Juan Carlos Gomez (CUBA)	C	–	–
Virgil Hill (USA)	–	C	–
Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)	–	–	C
Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)	1	5	8
Louis Azille (DR)	2	4	–
Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)	3	–	–
Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)	4	12	–
Dale Brown (CAN)	5	–	–
Arthur Williams (USA)	6	7	3
Ezra Sellars (USA)	7	–	–
Alexander Gurov (UKR)	8	2	6
Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)	9	6	11
James Toney (USA)	10	3	4
Jean Mark Mormeck (FRA)	–	1	–
Carl Thompson (GB)	12	8	7
Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)	–	9	–
Andre Purlett (GUY)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	–	5
Jorge Castro (ARG)	–	–	9
Ramon Garbey (USA)	–	–	10

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Roy Jones (USA)	C	C	C
Clinton Woods (GB)	1	4	7
Yawe Davis (ITA)	2	–	–
Michael Nunn (USA)	3	–	–
Jean-Marc Mormerck (FRA)	4	–	–
Reggie Johnson (USA)	5	6	5
Thomas Ulrich (GER)	6	8	–
Eric Harding (USA)	7	–	3
Julio Gonzalez (USA)	8	5	11
Glenn Kelly (AUSTRL)	9	3	1
Antonio Tarver (USA)	10	9	6
Lou Del Valle (USA)	–	1	–
Bruno Girard (FRA)	–	2	–
Robert Koon (USA)	19	7	–
David Telesco (USA)	–	10	9
Vacant	–	–	2
Will Taylor (USA)	29	–	4
Graciano Rocchigiani (ITA)	–	–	8
Lincoln Carter (USA)	13	–	10

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Vacant	C	1	2
Byron Mitchell (USA)	–	C	–
Sven Ottke (GER)	–	–	C
Eric Lucas (CAN)	1	–	–
Dingaan Thobela (SA)	2	–	–
Glenn Catley (GB)	3	–	–
Markus Beyer (GER)	4	–	11
Mads Larsen (DEN)	5	5	10
Mario Velt (GER)	6	–	–
Omar Sheika (USA)	7	7	4
Dana Rosenblatt (USA)	8	2	9
David Starie (GB)	9	6	5
Bruno Girard (FRA)	10	–	–
Andrei Shkalikov (RUS)	17	3	–
Manuel Siacca (PR)	–	4	–
Thomas Tate (USA)	14	8	3
Rudy Markussen (DEN)	21	9	–
Mikkel Kessler (DEN)	23	10	–
James Butler (USA)	15	–	1
Charles Brewer (USA)	18	12	6
Joe Calzaghe (GB)	–	–	7
Danilo Haussler (GER)	11	11	8

MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Bernard Hopkins (USA)	C	–	C
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	C	–
Erland Betare (FRA)	1	–	11
David Reid (USA)	2	2	5
Howard Eastman (GB)	3	1	4
Ali Ennebati (FRA)	4	–	7
Tito Mendoza (PAN)	5	11	3
Keith Holmes (USA)	6	7	6
Kevin Palmer (USA)	7	–	–
Carl Daniels (USA)	8	8	1
Cristian Sanavia (ITA)	9	–	–
Nick Martinez (USA)	10	–	–
Hassine Cherifi (FRA)	–	3	10
William Joppy (USA)	–	4	–
Darren Obah (AUSTRL)	–	5	–
Julio Cesar Green (DR)	–	6	–
Ryan Rhodes (GB)	–	9	–
Antonio Perugino (ITA)	26	10	–
Vacant	–	–	2
Antwun Echols (USA)	–	12	8
Brian Barbosa (USA)	13	–	9

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Francisco Castillejo (SPA)	C	–	–
Vacant	–	C	–
Felix Trinidad (PR)	–	–	C
Roman Karmazin (RUS)	1	6	–
Fernando Vargas (USA)	2	2	3
Winky Wright (USA)	3	3	1
J.C. Candelo (COL)	4	8	9
Alfred Ankamah (GHA)	5	–	–
Quirino Garcia (MEX)	6	–	10
Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)	7	–	–
Mamadou Thiam (FRA)	8	4	–
Travis Simms (USA)	9	11	–
Nicolas Cervera (COL)	10	–	–
Jose Flores (MEX)	12	1	5
Ike Quartey (GHA)	–	5	–
Frank Olsen (DEN)	–	7	–
Kevin Kelly (USA)	19	9	–
Adrian Stone (GB)	15	10	–
Robert Frazier (USA)	–	–	2
Bronco McKart (USA)	14	–	4
Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)	27	–	6
Ross Thompson (USA)	–	–	7
Alex Bunema (USA)	16	–	8

WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Shane Mosley (USA)	C	–	–
Andrew Lewis (GUY)	–	C	–
Vernon Forrest (USA)	–	–	C
Oscar De La Hoya (USA)	1	–	–
Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)	2	–	–
Hector Camacho Jr. (USA)	3	–	–
Kofi Jantuah (GHA)	4	5	–
Carlos Baldomir (ARG)	5	9	–
Danny Perez (USA)	6	10	9
Thomas Damgaard (DEN)	7	2	6
Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)	8	–	–
Michele Piccirillo (ITA)	9	6	4
Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)	10	–	10
Ricardo Mayorga (CR)	–	1	–
Michael Trabant (GERE)	27	3	–
Chantel Stanciel (USA)	20	4	–
James Page (USA)	–	7	–
Arturo Gatti (USA)	–	8	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Rafael Pineda (COL)	16	–	3
Cory Spinks (USA)	13	–	5
Oba Carr (USA)	19	–	7
Raul Frank (USA)	–	–	8

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)	C	C	–
Zab Judah (USA)	–	–	C
Oktay Urkal (TUR)	1	4	7
Diobelis Hurtado (CUB)	2	2	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	3	–	–
Gianluca Branco (ITA)	4	–	–
Mikhail Krivolapov (RUS)	5	–	–
Ray Oliveira (USA)	6	–	5

Gabriel Mapuoka (FRA)	7	11	9
Ricky Quiles (USA)	8	–	–
Sharmba Mitchell (USA)	9	5	–
Arturo Gatti (CAN)	10	–	–
Hector Camacho Jr (PR)	–	1	3
Randall Bailey (USA)	20	3	6
Khalid Rahilou (FRA)	–	6	–
Ricky Hatton (GB)	12	7	10
Alex Trujillo (PR)	–	8	–
Hiroyuki Maeda (JAP)	29	9	–
Demetrio Ceballos (PAN)	–	10	–
Allan Vester (DEN)	19	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Terronn Millett (USA)	–	–	4
Antonio Diaz (USA)	22	12	8

LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Takanori Hatakeyama (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Paul Spadafora (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Steve Johnston (USA)	1	–	4
Julien Lorcy (FRA)	2	1	7
Lawrence Ngobeni (SA)	3	–	–
Lovemore Ndou (SA)	4	–	–
Cesar Bazan (MEX)	5	–	–
Dennis Holbaek (DEN)	6	–	9
Diego Corrales (USA)	7	–	–
Juan Lazcano (USA)	8	11	8
Stefano Zoff (ITA)	9	4	–
Alex Trujillo (PR)	10	–	–
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	2	–
Rick Yoshimura (JAP)	–	3	–
Gilbert Serrano (VEN)	–	5	–
Miguel Callist (PAN)	–	6	–
Julio Diaz (USA)	–	7	–
Edson Xuxa Nascimento (BRA)	27	8	11
Alberto Sicurella (ARG)	–	9	–
Juan Gomez-Trinidad (PR)	16	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Victoriano Damian Sosa (DR)	12	–	3
Angel Manfredy (USA)	–	–	5
Acelino Freitas (BRA)	–	–	6
Efren Hinojosa (USA)	–	–	10

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Floyd Mayweather (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Joel Casamayor (CUB)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Steve Forbes (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Jesus Chavez (USA)	1	8	4
Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)	2	–	–
Kengo Nagashima (JAP)	3	–	–
Tiger Ari (PHIL)	4	–	–
Alejandro Gonzalez (MEX)	5	–	–
Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)	6	2	8
Philip Ndou (SA)	7	–	10
Carlos Hernandez (EL SALV)	8	–	–
Affif Djelti (FRA)	9	–	–
Randy Suico (PHIL)	10	–	–
Lakva Sim (MON)	–	1	–
Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)	–	3	–
Jongkwon Baek (KOR)	–	4	–
Lamont Pearson (USA)	–	5	–
Luis Navarro (USA)	13	6	9
Jorge Barrios (ARG)	–	7	–
Jose Miguel Cotto (PR)	–	9	–
Diego Corrales (USA)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
John Brown (USA)	–	–	2
Carlos Hernandez (USA)	–	–	3
Raul Balbi (ARG)	–	–	5
David Santos (USA)	–	–	6
Juan Arias (USA)	–	–	7

FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Erik Morales (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Derrick Gainer (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Frankie Toledo (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Injin Chi (KOR)	1	–	–
Guty Espadas (MEX)	2	–	–
Naseem Hamed (GB)	3	1	6
Johnny Tapia (USA)	4	8	–
Scott Harrison (GB)	5	–	–
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	6	–	–
Manuel Calvo (SPA)	7	–	–
Edgar Barcenas (MEX)	8	–	–
Augie Sanchez (USA)	9	–	3
Hector Velazquez (MEX)	10	–	–
Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)	–	2	–
Daniel Seda (PR)	29	3	–
Victor Polo (COL)	–	4	10
Antonio Cermeno (VEN)	–	5	–
Philip Ndou (SA)	–	6	–
Lewis Woods (US)	24	7	–
Angel Vasquez (PR)	–	9	5
Pablo Chacon (ARG)	–	10	–
Manuel Medina (MEX)	13	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)	–	–	4
Mbulelo Botile (SA)	–	–	7
Oscar Larios (MEX)	–	–	8
David Toledo (USA)	–	–	9

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Willie Jorrin (USA)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Clarence Adams (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Lehlo Ledwaba (SA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Michael Brodie (GB)	1	–	11
Oscar Larios (MEX)	2	–	–
Manny Pacquaio (PHIL)	3	–	6
Israel Vazquez (MEX)	4	–	9
Osamu Sato (JAP)	5	8	–
Salim Medjkoune (FRA)	6	5	8
Marcos Licona (USA)	7	–	–
Cesar Soto (MEX)	8	–	–
Agapito Sanchez (DR)	9	–	–
Kiattisak Chocchoi (THAI)	10	–	–
Yobert Ortega (VEN)	–	1	–
Jose Rojas (VEN)	28	2	–
Sithyodthong Yoddamrong (THAI)	–	3	–
Enrique Sanchez (MEX)	17	4	3
Danny Romero (USA)	–	6	–
Kozo Ishii (JAP)	21	7	–
Nestor Garza (MEX)	–	9	–
Johnny Armour (GB)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
F. Rakkiatgym (INDO)	–	–	4
Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)	–	–	5
Hector Julia Avila (DR)	11	–	7
Vladislav Antonov (RUS)	22	–	10

BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Paul Ayala (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Tim Austin (USA)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Ricardo Barajas (MEX)	1	–	–
Genaro Garcia (USA)	2	10	–
Adan Vargas (MEX)	3	2	4
Jess Maca (PHIL)	4	–	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	5	–	–
Johnny Bredahl (DEN)	6	4	–
Cuauhtemoc Gomez (MEX)	7	–	–
Diego Morales (MEX)	8	–	–
Rafael Marquez (MEX)	9	7	8
Jorge Lacierva (MEX)	10	–	–
Eidy Moya (VEN)	–	1	–
Leo Gamez (VEN)	–	3	–
Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)	–	5	–
Sahoiu Sithchai Condo (THAI)	–	6	–
Hugo Dianzo (MEX)	–	8	–
Diego Morales (MEX)	–	9	9
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Pete Frissina (USA)	–	–	3
Johnny Tapia (USA)	–	–	5
Danny Romero (USA)	–	–	6
Juan Cordoba (ARG)	–	–	7
Jesus Perez (COL)	–	–	10

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Masanori Tokuyama (JAP)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Setsuo Kobayashi (JAP)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Felix Machado (VEN)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Gerry Penalosa (PHIL)	1	–	–
In Joo Cho (KOR)	2	–	–
Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)	3	11	–
Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)	4	–	–
Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)	5	–	–
Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)	6	–	–
Vernie Torres (USA)	7	–	5
Pedro Alcazar (PAN)	8	–	7
Martin Castillo (MEX)	9	12	9
Luis Bolanos (COL)	10	10	10
Alexander Munoz (VEN)	–	1	–
Saen Sow Ploenchit (THAI)	–	2	6
Mbwana Matumla (TNZ)	–	3	–
Jesus Rojas (VEN)	–	4	4
Sornpichai Pisnurachank (THAI)	–	5	–
Hideki Todaka (JAP)	13	6	–
Yokthai Sithoar (THAI)	–	7	–
Kazuhiro Ryuko (JAP)	–	8	–
Samson 3K-Battery (THAI)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Mauricio Pastrana (COL)	–	–	3
Adonis Rivas (NIC)	–	–	8

FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Eric Morel (USA)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Irene Pacheco (COL)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Alex Ali Baba (GHA)	1	–	–
Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)	2	–	–
Mike Trejo (USA)	3	5	5
Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)	4	7	4
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	5	–	–
Gerson Guerrero (MEX)	6	–	8
Hayato Asai (JAP)	7	–	–
Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)	8	12	–
Horacio Chicagual (ARG)	9	–	–
Randy Mangubat (PHIL)	10	–	–
Jose Lopez (VEN)	–	1	–
Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)	–	2	–
Mzukisi Sikali (SA)	23	3	–
Isidro Garcia (MEX)	–	4	–
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	13	6	3
Masaki Nakamuna (JAP)	–	8	–
Gilberto Gonzalez (VEN)	–	9	–
Damaen Kelly (GB)	12	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
David Guerault (FRA)	17	–	6
Hawk Makepula (SA)	–	–	7
Ferid Ben Jeddou (TUN)	–	–	9
Angel Priolo (COL)	24	–	10

JR. FLYWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Yosam Choi (KOR)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Ricardo Lopez (MEX)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Jorge Arce (MEX)	1	5	4
Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)	2	–	–
Hidenobu Honda (JAP)	3	2	–
Saman Sorjaturong (THAI)	4	11	5
Eric Ortiz (MEX)	5	8	–
Jesus Martinez (MEX)	6	–	–
Takayuki Korogi (JAP)	7	–	–
Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)	8	6	7
Masibulele Makepula (SA)	9	10	–
Bebis Mendoza (COL)	10	4	–
Pichitnoi C. Siriwat (THAI)	–	1	–
Yura Dimas (MON)	–	3	–
Deeden Kengkarun (THAI)	–	7	–
Wolf Tokimitsu (JAP)	–	9	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Zolani Petelo (SA)	–	–	2
Alejandro Montiel (MEX)	–	–	3
Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)	–	–	6
Juan Keb Baas (MEX)	–	–	8
Everardo Morales (MEX)	–	–	9
Anis Roga (INDO)	–	–	10

STRAWWEIGHTS	WBC	WBA	IBF
Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)	**C**	**–**	**–**
Chana Porpaoin (THAI)	**–**	**C**	**–**
Roberto Leyva (MEX)	**–**	**–**	**C**
Yasuo Tokimitsu (JAP)	1	–	–
Jaewon Kim (KOR)	2	–	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	3	–	–
Yutaka Niida (JAP)	4	12	–
Khulile Makeba (SA)	5	11	–
Keitaro Hoshino (JAP)	6	3	–
Joma Gamboa (PHIL)	7	4	10
Erdene Chuluun (MON)	8	–	–
Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)	9	6	7
Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)	10	–	–
Noel Arambulet (VEN)	14	1	–
Jose Garcia (COL)	–	2	–
Kim Ki Hwan (KOR)	–	5	–
Hiroshi Nakajima (JAP)	–	7	8
Fasan Pongsawan (THAI)	–	8	–
Daniel Reyes (COL)	–	9	6
Takayuki Korogi (JAP)	–	10	–
Vacant	–	–	1
Vacant	–	–	2
Kermin Guardia (COL)	–	–	3
Wandee Chor Chareon (THAI)	–	–	4
Miguel Barrera (MEX)	16	–	5
Surachai Saengmorokot (THAI)	–	–	9

CLASSIC

From THE RING, May 1992

BOXING'S MAD ABOUT JAMES TONEY

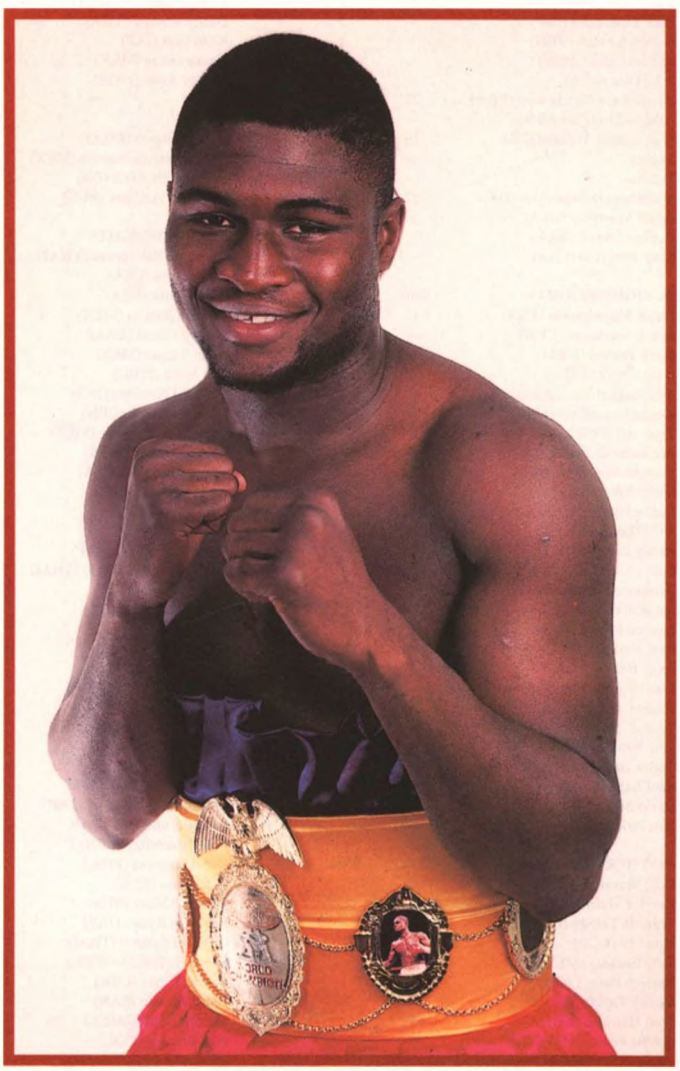
And James Toney's Mad About Everything

By Jeff Ryan

The fire that burns in a man's eyes or engulfs the back of his neck is like any other fire: It can be a best friend, or a worst enemy. The difference between controlled rage and uncontrolled rage is the difference between 200,000 equal-rights demonstrators marching peacefully on Washington, and Watts aflame. The difference between quiet sit-ins, and Kent State. The difference between restraining a criminal until the police arrive, or encouraging the crowd to stomp him to death.

If love can charm the pants off clear thinking, then anger can barrel it over and step on its head. That's why, more often than not, fury is not such a good thing to carry around. Carry it in your car, and you'll give a nun the finger because she stole the parking space you'd been eying from a half-block away. Bring it into the house, and the Lenox china is in danger. Take it to work with you, and you're liable to punch someone out before you even punch yourself in.

Angry carpenters walk around with swollen thumbs. Cops who can't holster their rage do things people wouldn't believe unless



James "Lights Out" Toney lets out a rare smile upon receiving THE RING's Fighter of the Year belt. Boxers who carry rage into the ring hardly ever succeed, said Toney. Yet keeping his anger in check was a 24-hour-a-day job for the undefeated IBF middleweight champ.

When Toney's mad, he's been known to throw chairs and put his fist through windows, according to Jackie Kallen, Toney's manager at the time. "His mood is like a wave," Kallen said of Toney. "You have to ride with it. If you try and fight it, you'll get wiped out."

they see them in living black-and-blue on somebody's home video. A surgeon working angry—no, that's something we don't even want to think about.

Then there's the boxer. To the uninitiated, boxing may seem to be the one profession that tolerates, even embraces, the angry young man. Rage + violence = ring success, isn't that the equation? Hardly. The successful fighter must be intense, yes. Mean-spirited, perhaps. But never, ever consumed with blinding rage. Dire are the consequences of fighting mad.

"You can't do it," said James "Lights Out" Toney, the undefeated IBF middleweight champion. "A good opponent, like Terry Norris, he'd peck an angry guy to death with the jab. The more the guy got hit, the more he'd get mad. Then he'd lose focus of his game plan and get knocked out."

Just as the alcoholic can sit and list the reasons he shouldn't drink, so too can Toney, THE RING's 1991 Fighter of the Year, talk about the dangers of going ballistic. But for him, keeping anger in check—both in the ring and out—is not a simple case of mind over matter. It's more like a 24-hour-a-day wrestling match with a grizzly bear on steroids.

Toney is as suited to be the cover boy on a magazine named *Mad*, as on one entitled THE RING, and he'd tell Alfred E. Neuman to his face. There are more vicious fighters in this most vicious of businesses, but Toney is the only one at the championship level who walks around with a boiling point of 98.7.

After a fight, even one he's ended in 90 seconds, bad ass Mike Tyson wears the most relieved expression this side of William Kennedy Smith. Michael Moorer, who says he one day wants to break a guy's cheekbone just to see what it looks like pushed in, can't even bring himself to look the opponent in the eye during the referee's instructions. For him, rage is a sudden, inexplicable phenomenon that overtakes him after he has an opponent hurt. Toney's anger doesn't wait that long. He's livid if the pen he's using to sign the fight contract doesn't have the right color ink.

"When he's mad, he'll put his fist through a glass window, throw a chair, knock over a table," explained Jackie Kallen, Toney's manager. "There's a valve in James. Sometimes I can see the mercury start to rise, and I know a tantrum is coming. You usually do get a warning. If you don't get out of his way then, it's your stupidity. His mood is like a wave. You have to ride with it. If you try to fight it, you'll get wiped out."

"It calms down after I hit something," Toney said. "When I'm mad, get out of my way or suffer the consequences."

The spontaneous combustion can be caused by just about anything from the entourage not being ready to leave for the gym when he is, to his being mocked by an opponent he particularly dislikes. When Toney was getting ready to climb on the scale for his first world title shot last May, IBF king Michael Nunn disdainfully touched the challenger's chin and pretended to pick lint off his head. Toney didn't share in the humor.

"Nunn is arrogant and cocky, and I tried to hurt him real bad," Toney said. "I tried to put him in the hospital for a while. That fight would have been a lot easier if I was calm. But I went right after him and got out of my game plan. I forgot the body attack and went headhunting."

In round 11, Nunn's chin finally appeared in Toney's rifle scope, and the challenger pulled the trigger on a left hook. Boom! No, it may not be wise to wrestle with that grizzly bear, but for once, the beast was pinned.

Following his controversial draw with Mike McCallum in December, a fight Toney appeared to have clearly won, the champion became enraged at McCallum's lawyer, Milt Chwasky. When promoter Bob Arum was criticizing the card of the one judge who voted for McCallum, Chwasky shouted to the promoter, "Bulls___!" Eying Chwasky, Toney barked, "Hey Mr. Hotshot Lawyer, kiss my ass. I'll f___ you up, you blind bastard!"

Toney's rage spilled out after his first fight with Mike McCallum, which was ruled a draw despite the fact that many ringsiders had Toney winning. Toney grew enraged at the postfight press conference and charged McCallum's attorney, Milt Chwasky.

THE RING RATINGS, May 1992

Pernell Whitaker

HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Evander Holyfield**, Atlanta, GA
2. **Mike Tyson**, Catskill, NY
3. **Riddick Bowe**, Brooklyn, NY
4. **Razor Ruddock**, Canada
5. **Ray Mercer**, Newark, NJ
6. **George Foreman**, Marshall, TX
7. **Tim Witherspoon**, Philadelphia, PA
8. **Tony Tucker**, Beverly Hills, CA
9. **Lennox Lewis**, England
10. **Michael Moorer**, Detroit, MI

CRUISERWEIGHTS
1. **Jeff Lampkin**, Youngstown, OH
2. **Bobby Czyz**, Montgomery, NJ
3. **James Warring**, Miami, FL
4. **Anaclet Wamba**, France
5. **Taoufik Belbouli**, France
6. **Al Cole**, Newark, NJ
7. **Orlin Norris**, Campo, CA
8. **Robert Daniels**, Miami, FL
9. **Dennis Andries**, Detroit, MI
10. **Dwight Qawi**, Lindenwold, NJ

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
1. **Thomas Hearns**, Detroit, MI
2. **Prince Charles Williams**, Mansfield, OH
3. **Virgil Hill**, Bismarck, ND
4. **Frank Tate**, Houston, TX
5. **Jeff Harding**, Australia
6. **Graciano Rocchigiani**, Germany
7. **Leeonzer Barber**, Detroit, MI
8. **Anthony Hembrick**, Beckley, WV
9. **Christophe Tiozzo**, France
10. **Guy Waters**, Australia

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Victor Cordoba**, N. Ireland
2. **Michael Nunn**, Davenport, IA
3. **Chris Eubank**, England
4. **Iran Barkley**, Bronx, NY
5. **Mauro Galvano**, Italy
6. **Nigel Benn**, England
7. **Darrin Van Horn**, Lexington, KY
8. **Lindell Holmes**, Detroit, MI
9. **Tony Thornton**, Glassboro, NJ
10. **Merqui Sosa**, New York, NY

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **James Toney**, Ann Harbor, MI
2. **Mike McCallum**, Brooklyn, NY
3. **Julian Jackson**, Virgin Islands
4. **Sumbu Kalambay**, Italy
5. **Roy Jones**, Pensacola, FL
6. **Steve Collins**, Brockton, MA
7. **Reggie Johnson**, Houston, TX
8. **Lamar Parks**, Greeneville, SC
9. **Segundo Mercado**, Puerto Rico
10. **Gerald McClellan**, Detroit, MI

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS
1. **Terry Norris**, Mission Valley, CA
2. **Gianfranco Rosi**, Italy
3. **Vinny Pazienza**, Cranston, RI
4. **John David Jackson**, Tucson, AZ
5. **Vernon Phillips**, New York, NY
6. **Julio Cesar Vasquez**, Argentina
7. **Gilbert Dele**, France
8. **Jorge Castro**, Argentina
9. **Aaron Davis**, Bronx, NY
10. **Carl Daniels**, St. Louis, MO

WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Meldrick Taylor**, Cheltenham, PA
2. **Buddy McGirt**, Hauppage, NY
3. **Simon Brown**, Germantown, MD
4. **Maurice Blocker**, Germantown, MD
5. **Genaro Leon**, Mexico
6. **Glenwood Brown**, Plainfield, NJ
7. **Crisanto Espana**, N. Ireland
8. **Santos Cardona**, Puerto Rico
9. **David Gonzalez**, San Jose, CA
10. **Yory Boy Campas**, Mexico

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS
1. **Julio Cesar Chavez**, Mexico
2. **Rafael Pineda**, Colombia
3. **Edwin Rosario**, Puerto Rico
4. **Terrence Alli**, Linden, NJ
5. **Charles Murray**, Newark, NJ
6. **Hector Camacho**, Big Cypress, FL
7. **Greg Haugen**, Henderson, NV
8. **Roger Mayweather**, Las Vegas, NV
9. **Loreto Garza**, Sacramento, CA
10. **Pat Barrett**, England

LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Pernell Whitaker**, Norfolk, VA
2. **Freddie Pendleton**, Miami, FL
3. **Jorge Paez**, Mexico
4. **Tracy Spann**, Plainfield, NJ
5. **Darryl Tyson**, Washington, D.C.
6. **Sharmba Mitchell**, Takoma Park, MD
7. **Chil Sung Chun**, South Korea
8. **Poli Diaz**, Spain
9. **Joey Gamache**, Lewiston, ME
10. **Miguel Angel Gonzalez**, Mexico

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS
1. **Jeff Fenech**, Australia
2. **Azumah Nelson**, Ghana
3. **Brian Mitchell**, South Africa
4. **Tony Lopez**, Sacramento, CA
5. **Genaro Hernandez**, Los Angeles, CA
6. **John-John Molina**, Puerto Rico
7. **Eugene Speed**, Palmer Park, MD
8. **Regilio Tuur**, Whitestone, NY
9. **Gabe Ruelas**, Arleta, CA
10. **Jackie Gunguluza**, South Africa

FEATHERWEIGHTS
1. **Paul Hodkinson**, England
2. **Manuel Medina**, Mexico
3. **Yung Kyun Park**, South Korea
4. **Troy Dorsey**, Mansfield, TX
5. **Marcos Villasana**, Mexico
6. **Maurizio Stecca**, Italy
7. **Jose Martinez**, Hanford, CA
8. **Tom Johnson**, Detroit, MI
9. **Kevin Kelley**, Flushing, NY
10. **Ricardo Cepeda**, Bronx, NY

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS
1. **Jesse Benavides**, Corpus Christi, TX*
2. **Welcome Ncita**, South Africa
3. **Raul Perez**, Mexico

With that, Toney charged toward Chwasky, twice having to be tackled and restrained.

Toney can't explain exactly why he is one giant exposed nerve, but a lot of it can be traced to his upbringing. Though he was raised in the college town of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and not some inner-city ghetto, growing up was no less painful. That's why his dream fight isn't against Thomas Hearns, Terry Norris, Julian Jackson, or Iran Barkley, but against a guy named James Toney Sr. The head of the Toney household took off 20 years ago, leaving behind three-year-old James Jr. and his mother, Sherry. Being raised without a male influence, Toney became increasingly bitter.

Time hasn't healed the wounds, just left him more time to seethe. He hasn't seen his father since the day he left, and that isn't likely to change if the elder Toney reads this particular article.

"A lot of hostility," Toney said. "I can't wait to beat his ass real bad."

"James can't handle disrespect or things he sees as an injustice," Kallen said.

4. **Daniel Zaragosa**, Mexico
5. **Luis Mendoza**, Colombia
6. **Jesus Salud**, San Diego, CA
7. **Pedro Decima**, Argentina
8. **Tracy Patterson**, New Paltz, NY
9. **Jemal Hinton**, District Heights, MD
10. **Luisito Espinosa**, Philippines

BANTAMWEIGHTS

1. **Orlando Canizales**, Laredo, TX
2. **Israel Contreras**, Venezuela
3. **Joichiro Tatsuyoshi**, Japan
4. **Junior Jones**, Brooklyn, NY
5. **Victor Rabanales**, Mexico
6. **Duke McKenzie**, England
7. **Thierry Jacob**, France
8. **Yong Hoon Lee**, South Korea
9. **Eliecer Julio**, Colombia
10. **Gerardo Martinez**, San Jose, CA

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

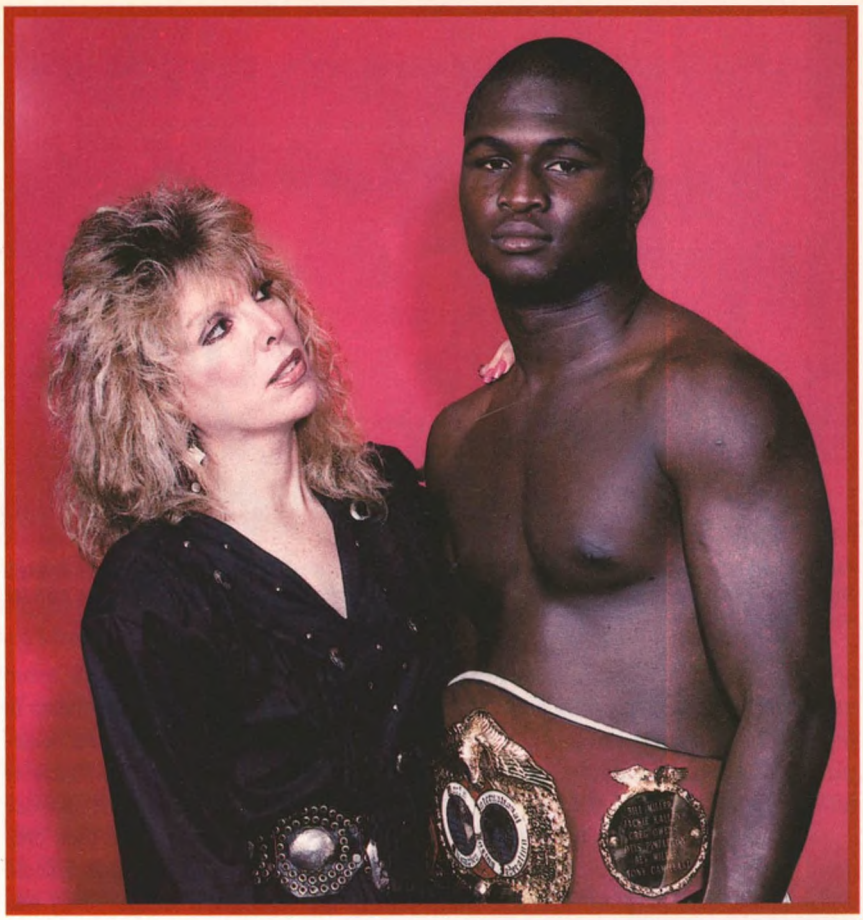
1. **Robert Quiroga**, San Antonio, TX
2. **Sung Kil Moon**, South Korea
3. **Jose Ruiz**, Puerto Rico
4. **Thalernsak Sithbaobay**, Thailand
5. **Greg Richardson**, Youngstown, OH
6. **Armando Castro**, Mexico
7. **Vincenzo Belcastro**, Italy
8. **David Griman**, Venezuela
9. **Carlos Mercado**, Colombia
10. **Katsuya Onizuka**, Japan

FLYWEIGHTS

1. **Muangchai Kittikasem**, Thailand
2. **Dave McAuley**, Ireland
3. **Yang Kang Kim**, South Korea
4. **Rodolfo Blanco**, Colombia
5. **Sot Chitalada**, Thailand
6. **Jung Koo Chang**, South Korea
7. **Yuri Arbachakov**, Soviet Union
8. **Scotty Olson**, Las Vegas, NV
9. **Yun Un Chin**, South Korea
10. **Ysaias Zamudio**, Blythe, CA

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

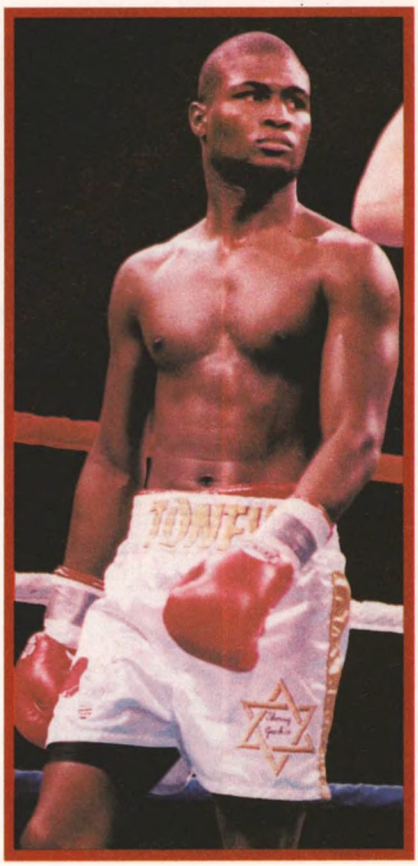
1. **Hiroki Ioka**, Japan
2. **Myung Woo Yuh**, South Korea
3. **Michael Carbajal**, Phoenix, AZ
4. **Humberto Gonzalez**, Mexico
5. **Melchor Cob Castro**, Mexico
6. **Domingo Sosa**, Dominican Republic
7. **Leon Salazar**, Panama
8. **Jose DeJesus**, Puerto Rico
9. **Gerry Penalosa**, Philippines
10. **Robinson Cuestas**, Panama



Kallen stuck by Toney, despite his erratic tantrums. Toney lived with Kallen and her family. As a tribute to Kallen, who is Jewish, Toney used to wear a Star of David on his trunks.

"He's usually right, but he expresses his point more violently than anyone else."

Toney may have been one parent short growing up, but he gained a second mom when he reached adulthood. The champion and the 45-year-old Kallen, a former publicist for Thomas Hearns, are incredibly close. Toney lives with Kallen and her family during training. She cooks for him, they play cards, go to the movies, go out to dinner, and watch endless hours of fight tapes. Toney is constantly filling Kallen's gas tank to make sure she doesn't run out, zipping her purse and tucking it under her coat when she forgets to close it, and escorting her out to her car, even in broad daylight. As a tribute to Kallen, who is Jewish, Toney wears a Star of David on his trunks.

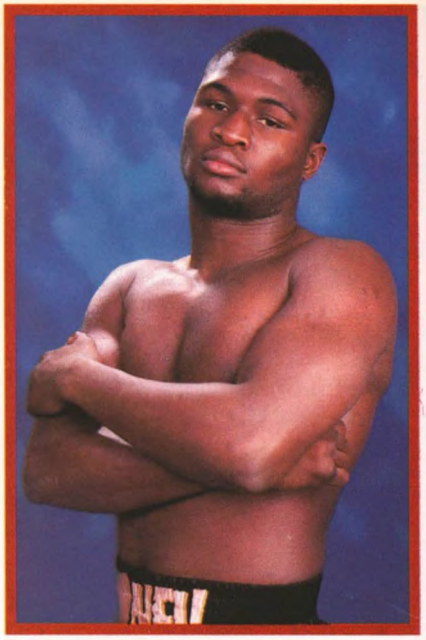


But even Kallen isn't insulated from the fighter's wrath, a fact that convinced her more than anything else of how uncontrollable Toney's moods can be. One day in the gym, James had a chip the size of a cinder block balancing on his shoulder, and the tension was hanging in the air like a cloud of ash over a volcano. Kallen approached her fighter to calm him down with a little feminine charm.

"It was the first time he turned it on me," she recalled. "In front of everybody he said, 'Get the eff out of my face!' It shocked me. I left the gym and didn't come back for days."

It would be easy to dismiss Toney as another example of why boxing can't

Even Kallen, standing next to Toney after the draw against McCallum, felt the wrath of Toney's anger. One day in the gym, Toney went on a verbal tirade that forced Kallen away from the gym for several days. "He's got that side of him that likes violence," said Kallen.



Toney's viciousness was countered by his caring for handicapped children, and spending Thanksgiving Day at a Salvation Army shelter, passing out food for the homeless. He would also walk around the city, handing out $20 bills to anyone he thought was in need.

attract advertisers or endear itself to the mainstream. But to simply label him a time bomb is to explore just one side of a complex personality that keeps all those around him constantly guessing.

Toney spends countless hours working with handicapped children, buying them puppies, or toys, and visiting them in hospitals. While in Secaucus, New Jersey, to train for his Atlantic City showdown with McCallum, Toney got the idea to spend Thanksgiving at a Salvation Army shelter in Manhattan, passing out food for the homeless. Often he'd walk around the streets of the city, handing out a $20 bill to anyone who looked like he could have used one. When one pathetic-looking creature ordered him to take his bill and beat it, Toney was as hurt as Kallen has ever seen him.

Marvel at Toney's attitude or be contemptuous of it, but in either case, you're not likely to turn away whenever you see him fighting. And that should be quite often. In his celebrated year of '91, he waged war six times, including the upset of Nunn, and title

JAMES TONEY The Year That Was

We're willing to bet that at the beginning of 1991, most boxing fans had never heard of James Toney. Now he's a pay-per-view fighter, a world champion, and the best middleweight in the world. These are the fights that made him.

W 12 Merqui Sosa, Atlantic City, January 12: How far has Toney come? On this ESPN-televised show, Toney-Sosa, a battle of unbeaten prospects, is an undercard bout! (The main event is Charles Murray-David Taylor.) Sosa carries the reputation as a monstrous hitter, but Toney floors him in the third round and competes evenly on the inside. He clearly deserves the decision. The scoring, however, is bizarre: 115-112 and 117-109 for Toney, and 114-113 for Sosa.

KO 6 Alberto Gonzalez, Las Vegas, March 31: With 20 kayos in 26 wins, Gonzalez seems like a risk. But Toney issues all the punishment in what is, on paper at least, his easiest fight of the year.

KO 11 Michael Nunn, Davenport, Iowa, May 10: All Toney does is come from behind to score a spectacular knockout in Nunn's hometown. Outboxed for nine rounds, the challenger begins to land his right in the 10th. A hook in the 11th drops the unbeaten IBF champion, and later in the round, a right produces another knockdown—and the end of the fight.

At the time of the kayo, Toney, a 20-1 underdog, is trailing by four, six, and eight points. "Oh, my God!" is all Jackie Kallen, Toney's manager, can offer.

W 12 Reggie Johnson, Las Vegas, June 29: Only seven weeks after winning the title, Toney defends against a difficult and speedy southpaw. Johnson, the number-one contender, scores a flash knockdown in round two, and, keeping his distance, proves difficult to hit. Toney suffers a nasty cut over his left eye in the final round, but finishes aggressively, and survives by split decision. (Scores: 115-112, 114-113, and 113-114.)

KO 4 Francesco Dell'Aquila, Monte Carlo, October 12: Toney fails to make weight by a half-pound, but the challenger agrees to waive the rule. Aware that he is ill-prepared for a distance fight, the champion demands a fast pace and steamrolls the former European champion, who is clearly a level below.

D 12 Mike McCallum, Atlantic City, December 13: In his toughest test, Toney leaves nothing in reserve against one of the best boxers in the '80s. What starts as a chess match turns into a sensational shootout of rights and counter rights. Both middleweights are exhausted at the end, but Toney staggers McCallum in the bout's last five seconds and retains the title by a draw. (Scores: 116-112 Toney, 115-113 McCallum, and 114-114.) Almost every ringside observer has Toney in front.

defenses against Reggie Johnson (the IBF's number-one contender), Francesco Dell'Aquila (in Monte Carlo; Toney's first bout on foreign soil), and McCallum (a two-division titlist with a record of 42-1). The break-nose pace will continue in '92.

There are two reasons for the workaholic schedule. The first is obvious.

"He's got that side of him that likes violence," said Kallen. "If you don't keep him in the gym, who knows what would happen in the street."

The second reason has to do with creating an attraction in an era when boxing is starved for stars, and attempting to establish Toney's worth. In Toney's sport, judging that worth is a subjective exercise.

The surfer can splashdance through the fearsome Banzai Pipeline, the skater can land the triple Axel, the quarterback can win the Super Bowl. All confirm arrival as the real thing. The boxer's goals aren't as concrete. The athlete who gets measured for everything from fist size to ankle size has no measuring stick for his success. Even if he's a world champion, nowadays, so what? Today's fighter has to fight. He has to let everyone see that each time he goes through the ropes, the other guy always ends up outworked, outpunched, or just plain out.

Recognizing that there is only one long, meticulous road to stardom, Toney and Kallen have opted not to aim for one quickie megapurse, but instead take fights that give the champion invaluable exposure. They agreed to the Johnson defense a mere seven weeks after the demanding Nunn fight because they were anxious to get on ABC's last telecast of '91. As we went to press, Toney was slated to fight Dave Tiberi on ABC in February. Most fighters wouldn't follow the $500,000 payday from a McCallum fight with a $100,000 network TV bout, but Toney is anxious to deliver a message.

"Other fighters just talk smack," he said. "I'm real. I do fight everyone. I fight all the time. And I promise I'll keep doing that. Anyone who's in the ring with me gets knocked out. If not, I'll make 'em suffer real bad."

For all the talk of destruction, it is ironic that the fight that has thus far been Toney's defining moment, the masterful outboxing of McCallum, was an exercise in coolness and control.

And surprise, surprise. Toney isn't even mad about that.

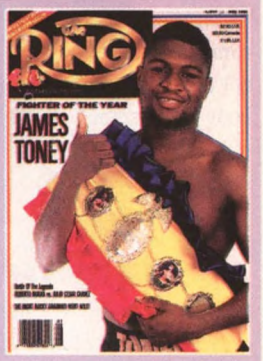
"I had no respect for McCallum because he said he was gonna take me to school," Toney pointed out. "And he had a Jamaican posse at the weigh-in talking trash. I was happy I outboxed him. Very happy. Before that, people were saying, 'Toney's just a slugger.' They found out what I can do."

And in the months ahead, they're going to find out what he's all about. Kallen is looking to soften the Toney image, to rein him in a bit and avoid incidents like the one that followed the McCallum bout. But she makes sure to emphasize, "I wouldn't want to soften him all around. That might hurt his boxing."

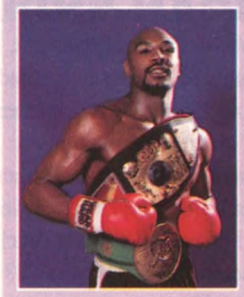
Though she, too, is occasionally forced to duck for cover, Kallen recognizes that her champion is at his best—that's Fighter-of-the-Year best—when fighting injustices, whether real or imagined. Some people look at the world through rose-colored glasses. James Toney peers at it through eyes bloodshot with rage.

He doesn't see any difference. ■

THE RING, May 1992



The Cover: James Toney, the IBF middleweight champion, graces the cover as THE RING's Fighter of the Year. Toney started his 1991 campaign in relative obscurity, but by the end of the year had made himself a pay-per-view fighter.



Simply Marvelous: Former undisputed middleweight champion of the world Marvelous Marvin Hagler adorned the center section of THE RING with a brief bio of his career. His distinguished reign ran from September 27, 1980-April 6, 1987.

Does Father Know Best?: Four years after being robbed in Seoul, South Korea, of an Olympic gold medal, Roy Jones was still searching for his first pro world title. Speculation was that Roy Jones Sr. was stunting his son's progress by not signing with a major promoter and by taking on subpar opponents.

From The Streets Of North Philly: Before the world found out who current IBF/WBC middleweight champ Bernard Hopkins is, "The Executioner" was featured in THE RING as a "New Face" prospect working his way up the ratings. Hopkins was 14-1 (11) at the time, saying "I have no silver spoon in my mouth."

Fighter Of The Month: Iran Barkley got a shot at the IBF super middleweight title by happenstance. Barkley was in Top Rank's offices when a call came asking for an opponent for IBF super middleweight champ Darrin Van Horn. Barkley jumped at the chance, then chewed Van Horn up in two rounds to win the title.

COME OUT WRITING

We welcome your letters, which may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Ft. Washington, PA 19034

DURAN ENDURES

Roberto Duran is the heart, soul, and everything of boxing. He has made the sport what it is. So why must we always be reminded of "No mas"? Most recently was the Tyson-Golota fight. First of all, Golota is no Duran, and therefore no comparison should be made. At least Duran had a good reason to quit his fight.

Duran is a four-time former world champion, and what's so ridiculous is that he's never been Fighter of the Year! There have been many times when the award could've gone to him, like in 1972 when he knocked out Ken Buchanan, or in '78 when he kayoed Esteban DeJesus, or in '80 when he hammered Ray Leonard, or '83 when he took out Davey Moore, or '89 when he folded Iran Barkley.

Also, Duran was a great middleweight champion, and should have been included in the "Twenty Greatest Middleweights Of All-Time" in your January 2001 issue.

Throughout the years, Duran has shown everything it takes to be a legend: strength (Duran-Leonard I), skill (Duran-DeJesus), determination (Duran-Barkley), and most of all, raw courage (Joppy-Duran). So instead of thinking of Roberto Duran as the "no mas guy," we should look at him for who and what he really is, a former world champion with hands of stone and a heart of gold.

TAMMIE SANTIAGO
Sandys, Bermuda

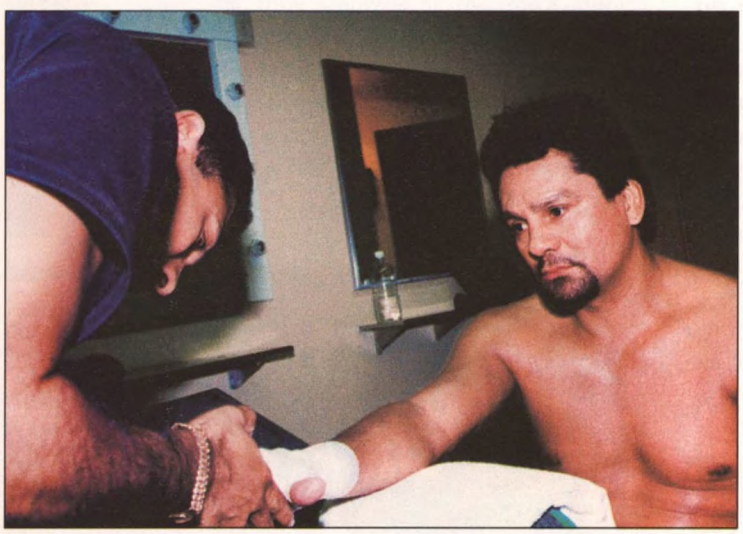


PHOTO BY SCOTT ROMER

Despite the fact that he's still fighting years past his prime, Roberto Duran has not diminished his status as a sure bet for the Hall of Fame. According to reader Tammie Santiago, Duran represents everything that is good about boxing.

ROCK, WE SALUTE YOU!

"Congratulate me after I win the title," Hasim Rahman said in Eric Raskin's "Looking Ahead" column in the June 2001 issue of THE RING. So congratulations, Hasim, from an Englishman who has admired Lennox Lewis for unifying the world heavyweight boxing championship.

Rahman prepared and fought just as he said he would, and joins James J. Braddock (although Braddock lost 22 times prior to winning the title, not twice like Rahman) as one of the great heavyweight upset stories. Rock, you deserved a chance and you were given it by a fighting champion. Now you owe your first defense to the man who unified the title—Lennox Lewis.

BARRIE READER
Surrey, England

DEAR LENNOX ...

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you for all the years you've been a boxer. You have been the best heavyweight fighter of the last 10 years, bar none, and you have given our nation eternal pride.

Although you lost to Hasim "The Rock" Rahman (congratulations to him), anyone with the slightest knowledge of boxing realizes you weren't in optimum condition. And credit to you for not excusing

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

English fans haven't deserted Lennox Lewis despite his crushing defeat to Hasim Rahman. British readers Barrie Reader and Jagdeep Sandu both write to give Rahman his props, but also want to see a rematch with Lewis.

your performance in that manner as we have seen so many so-called greats (Holyfield) do in the past. If you had been in shape, The Rock wouldn't have lasted three rounds, a point which I am confident would be proven in a rematch.

I wish you the best of luck in the future in whatever route your life ventures down. However, we all know that if you so choose, the heavyweight title is within your grasp and you could easily bring the championship back to where it belongs—in the land of hope and glory.

JAGDEEP SANDU
Leicester, England

BOXING IN THE MAINSTREAM

After many years of suffering disregard, the sport of boxing is ready to reenter the mainstream. The powers that be have finally realized that the key to attracting fans and getting good publicity is to make the best fights possible. By putting the best fighters in the same ring, a great fight is, on most occasions, almost guaranteed.

The year 2000 was a hugely productive year for our sport. Thankfully, this year has continued the resurgence. Whenever a great fight takes place, boxing gets good attention from the media, thus enabling the general public to take notice of the Sweet Science, therefore increasing its fan base. This constructive attention will hopefully overshadow the negatives such as poor judging, corruption, and the Mike Tyson circus.

RONAN KEENAN
Dublin, Ireland

SUGAR TIMEWARP

I never saw Sugar Ray Robinson fight in his prime, but from what I hear, he must have had a similar makeup as the Sugar of this time—Sugar Shane Mosley. Mosley has all of the tools. I am a big fan of boxing and never have I seen another fighter with the blend of speed and power, to go along with toughness and a good chin, as I've seen with Mosley.

ANTHONY DeDONA
Ozone Park, NY

THE JOKE'S ON HAMED

I've been a steady RING reader and fan since 1970, and you've been disappointing me with the whole Prince Naseem Hamed hype over the last 3½ years. Let's face it, Hamed fought only fighters who were either shot or too light for him. Anyone who was even a little surprised by what Marco Antonio Barrera did him should take up golf, because they obviously don't know anything about boxing. Hamed will never be anything more than a sideshow, sort of a short Butterbean. Could you imagine if Naz went up to 130 pounds? Hamed is, was, and always will be a joke.

PAUL RAUL
St. Petersburg, FL

BRING ON BARRERA-MORALES II

Although he may have his work cut out for him, Marco Antonio Barrera is already being compared to Mexican legend Julio Cesar Chavez. In true Chavez fashion, Barrera outclassed and outboxed Naseem Hamed from the opening bell until the last. Next, I would love to see Barrera-Erik Morales II. If their first fight was voted THE RING's Fight of the Year for 2000, there's no telling what the sequel would produce.

PETEY CARO
El Centro, CA ■

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE

Mexican superstar Marco Antonio Barrera bends Prince Naseem Hamed's nose with a left en route to handing Naz the first defeat of his pro career. Reader Petey Caro writes that he wants to see a rematch of the fabulous Barrera-Erik Morales war next.

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

FEATHERWEIGHT FEAST

PHOTO BY ANTHONY NESTE/HBO

Barrera and Morales are going to war again

I'd tell you to circle the date on your calendar, but we don't know exactly what the date is going to be. So to be safe, circle all of November and all of December on your calendar, because if you're a boxing fan, you won't want to miss this fight. According to sources on both sides of the negotiations, **Marco Antonio Barrera** and **Erik Morales** are headed for a rematch to their magnificent February 2000 battle before 2001 is out.

"I'm confident the fight will get made," said **Todd DuBoef** of Top Rank, Morales' promotional company, in early-June. "Our discussions with Barrera's people are looking very positive."

"It'll get made," echoed **John Jackson**, Barrera's adviser. "I don't know when exactly, but it'll get made."

Whenever it is (the working date, according to DuBoef, is December 1), it can't be soon enough. A rematch seemed natural after Morales won a hotly disputed decision over Barrera in the Fight of the Year the first time around, but it didn't pan out immediately. Morales said he needed to move up from 122 pounds to 126, and Barrera, who felt he had already beaten Morales and didn't need to go chasing after him, stayed at 122. But this past April, Barrera was granted a shot at featherweight ruler **Prince Naseem Hamed**, won handily, and suddenly found himself atop the division in which Morales was campaigning. Hamed failed to act on his right to an immediate rematch, thus opening the door for Barrera-Morales II, which most fans would agree is a more attractive fight right now than Barrera-Hamed II.

"I think it's something everyone wants to see," DuBoef said. "Morales-Barrera could do better on pay-per-view than Hamed-Barrera did. That belief is based on their first fight, and on the fact that most of the Hamed-Barrera buys came on the West Coast, from the Hispanic fans."

Often times, a rematch lacks intrigue because we've already seen the way the fighters' styles will mesh. But Morales-Barrera is an exception. Morales typically boxes more than he did in the war with Barrera, and given the way he seemed a bit gun-shy against **Guty Espadas**, it's reasonable to believe he'll take a more cautious approach against Barrera the second time around. Barrera, meanwhile, shocked everyone by beating Hamed with his brain rather than his heart, outboxing The Prince every step of the way. So will this be a boxing match or another all-out war? We probably won't know until fight night.

"I think one of Marco's strengths is the fact that he can box and brawl," Jackson said. "So as you plan to fight him, which Barrera do you plan to fight? I'm not sure what we'll do, but even if I did know, strategically, it's to our advantage not to say what we're going to do."

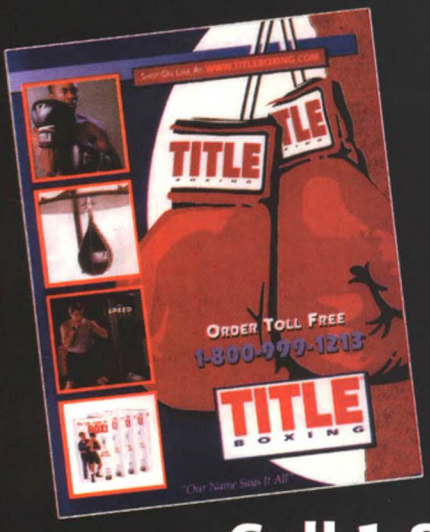
Meanwhile, whoever wins becomes the target of the division's money man, the comebacking Hamed. Naz reportedly has his eyes on an October fight with **Johnny Tapia** in New York—which is no gimme considering the way Barrera outboxed Hamed—and then it'll be either Barrera-Hamed II or Morales-Hamed I.

LISTEN UP

Bojado: On the fast track

Despite the hand injuries WBC 130-pound champion **Floyd Mayweather** suffered in his May defense against **Carlos Hernandez**, his pay-per-view bout against top-rated **Jesus Chavez** is still a go for October 6. Mayweather saw a doctor in Los Angeles the week after the Hernandez fight, and the prognosis was that, with the help of therapy and a new hand-wrapping method, his mitts would be healed in plenty of time for the fight … Fresh off a knockout of **In Joo Cho** that solidified his status as the best 115-pounder in the world, **Masamori Tokuyama** will defend his WBC title against another dangerous ex-champ, **Gerry Penalosa**, in September. Aside from two disputed decision losses to Cho, Penalosa hasn't lost in nine years and is coming off a first-round kayo of solid **Keiji Yamaguchi** … You think Main Events has confidence in **Francisco Bojado**? The 18-year-old lightweight prospect's promoters are already talking about putting him in with an opponent like recent world title challenger **Billy Irwin**, even though "Panchito" had only five fights under his belt as of press time. By the way, if Irwin calls himself "The Kid," what does that make Bojado? The Embryo? ■

NO POLITICS. JUST BOXING.



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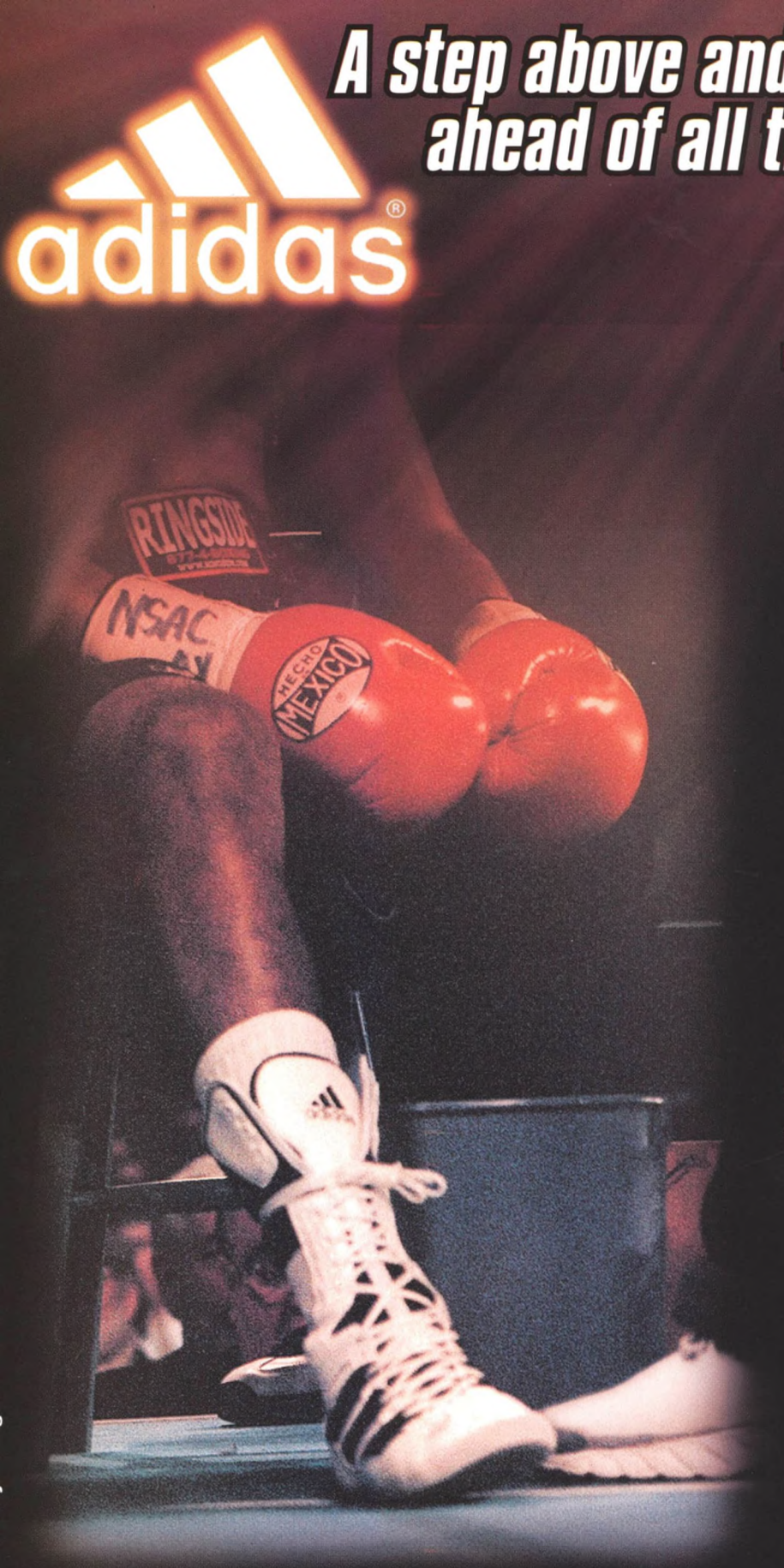

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